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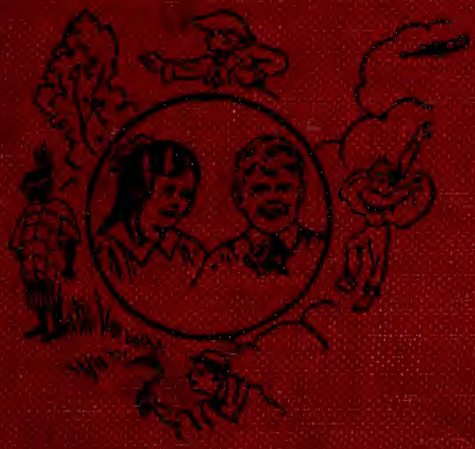
THE LITTLE WASHINGTONS



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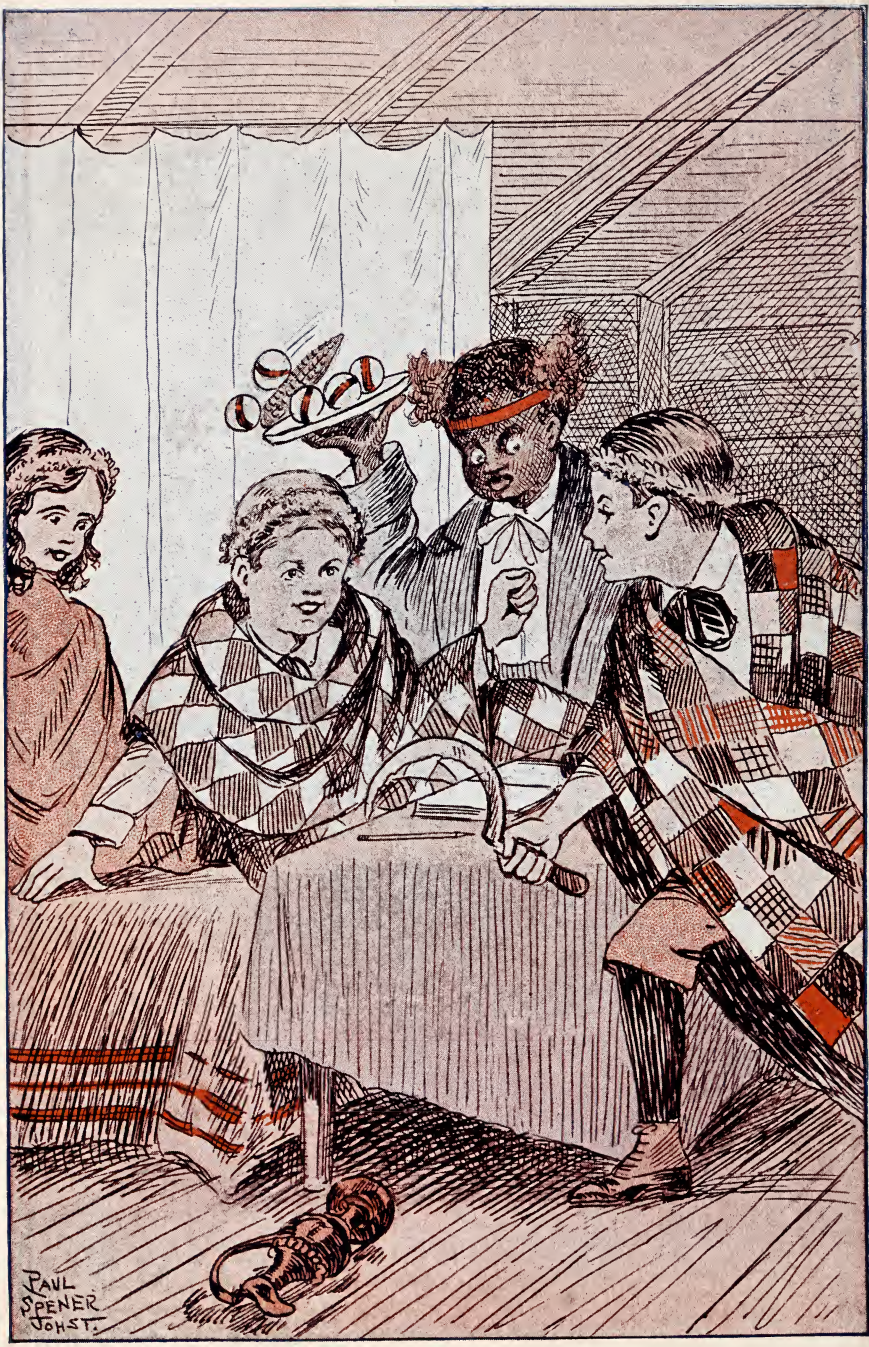
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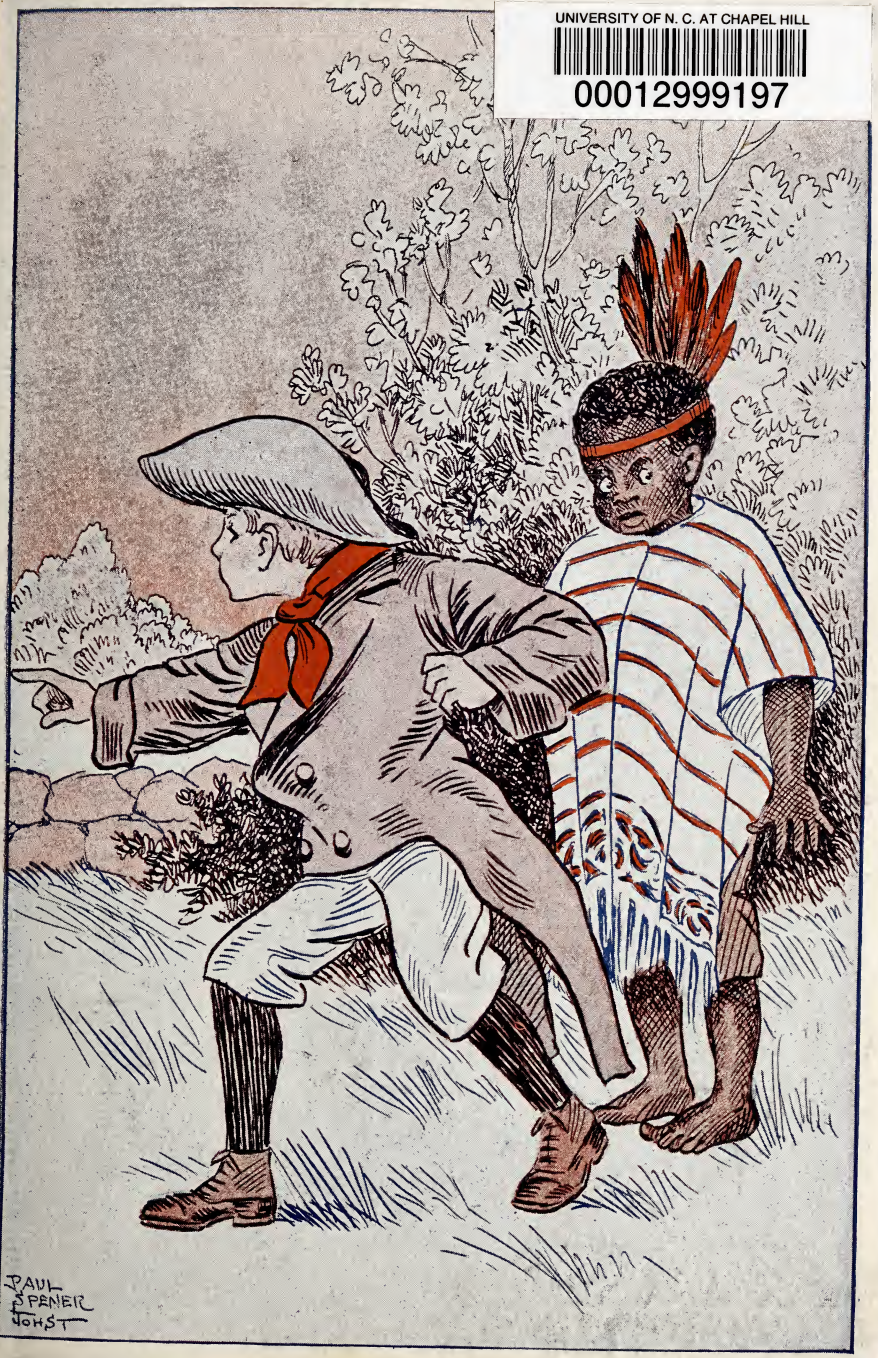

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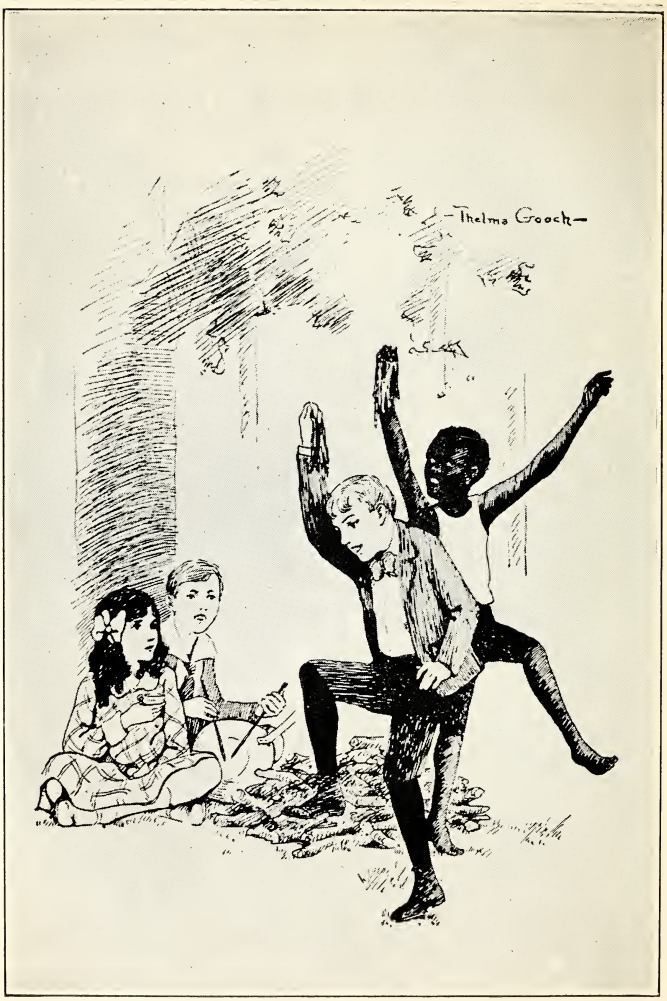

WITH A WILD SHOUT THE WAR-DANCE BEGAN.
The Little Washingtons. *Frontispiece.*

THE LITTLE WASHINGTONS

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BY

LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY

AUTHOR OF
THE POLLY BREWSTER BOOKS,
THE GIRL SCOUTS BOOKS, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

GROSSET & DUNLAP
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CONTENTS

THE LITTLE WASHINGTONS

CHAPTER I

GEORGE AND MARTHA

"NO, MARTHA, you can't play Lady Washington yet, 'cause we need you to be mother this time!" exclaimed a little boy of about eleven years, named George Parke.

"But, George, when you told us all about this make-believe game, you *said* I could be Lady Washington, and wear curls and a train to my dress!" disputed the boy's sister Martha, who was about nine and a half years of age.

"So you can, just as soon as we have played the first part, but we can't have a war and make me a general right off, before we grow up and show our

country what a fine young man I am, don't you see?" explained George.

"Besides, Martha, George Washington didn't marry Martha Custis till after he began to be a soldier, so some one must play his mother, Mrs. Washington, to start with, and you are the only girl here," anxiously added a younger boy of about eight.

"Well, if I play Mrs. Washington now, what will you be?" questioned Martha.

"Me? Oh, I can be anything George says, until the time when we go to war and I am Marquis Lafayette," replied John Graham, the little boy who lived next door to the Parkes in the suburbs of Washington, D. C.

"Well, all right! I s'pose I'll have to," sighed Martha reluctantly; "but it would be more fun to begin right where the general has to leave home to fight and you come over from France to help and Jim Jackson plays Hercules!"

"We'll get to that place in a few days, Martha! I'd rather play war and

order John and my men about than make believe I'm your oldest son and living in the country—but things have to start at the beginning. You know what mother read to us this morning from Washington's memoirs—he always believed in law and order, so we must act just as he would," explained George.

"Then you must be very obedient, and do just what I tell you, George, because *he* was a model son and very respectful to his mother," quickly added Martha, feeling a keen sense of joy in the prospects of making her independent brother do her bidding.

"Humph! Washington wasn't home very long, you remember, after he left school to do surveying. So I won't have to be *very* obedient to you," argued George, with dissatisfaction in his tone.

"Even so, the real Washington was so dutiful a son that he always wrote letters to tell his mother what he was doing—and he *always* asked advice on things of importance. That's what you

must do of me!" declared Martha, lifting her head authoritatively.

"Come on in the house, John—I'm going to get that big book mother read from this morning," said George, starting for the back porch.

"I'm coming, too, 'cause I want to borrow grandma's lace cap and a pair of specs," cried Martha, as she ran close at the boys' heels.

While the three playmates are in the house, let me tell you what all this planning was about.

George and Martha Parke were connected in a distant way with the Parke and Custis family of long ago. Of course you remember that the father of his country, George Washington, married the widow Martha Custis, who was later called "Lady Washington"; and that was the subject of the conversation between the children when this story opened.

George and Martha Parke lived in a lovely house surrounded by ample grounds, a short distance from the capital of the United States—Washington.

And in the neighboring house lived a little playmate, John Graham. Then there was a family of cousins, who lived a short distance from the Parkes—just near enough to allow the children to run back and forth for visits without the parents worrying over their safety.

As is customary in many old Southern families, devoted family servants, descended from slave days, are retained generation after generation. These faithful colored servitors marry into the staffs of their own or neighboring families, and the children that are born are educated and trained by the family whom they serve.

In the Parke household descendants of the old slaves could be found. Jenny, the cook, had married the butler of the Graham household, but remained with the Parkes while Sam still lived with the Grahams. A little boy, Jim, was the only child of this couple, and he was being seriously considered by the Parke children to play the part of Hercules, the famous cook of the Washington family. Jim was about

seven years old, and owing to the constant companionship of his granny, who was the old family nurse of the Parke children, he had acquired much of the interesting dialect peculiar to the old Southern slaves, and still noticeable in genuine descendants of these good, faithful servants.

About the time this story opens, the Parke and Graham families had but recently returned from their country farms where the summers were spent, and studies and recreation were again resumed by the children. George Washington always was a great favorite in American History for the children since Mrs. Parke began reading a very interesting book of his life to them, and they conceived the idea to pretend the whole story as it progressed day after day.

Every afternoon was playtime, and the children were free to follow this plan of amusement: Grandma Parke eagerly abetting the suggestion by offering bits of lace and silk, a shawl and other properties, to make the game

more realistic. As grandma was very proud of her ancestry, she was delighted to hear of the "make-believe" general's scheme and at once began planning how she might add to the interest by making a cocked hat and costume for George, a dress and other requirements for Martha, and suitable toilettes for Lafayette and Hercules.

But here come the children, so we must stop talking of their plans until some other time when they are not present.

"Here, John, you sit down on this cushion, while Martha sits on the lawn chair and makes notes of what we need to do in our game. I'll read from the book so's it'll be all true and right," commanded George, as the three children reached a group of birches growing at one side of the back lawn.

George hastily thumbed the pages at the first part of the book and finally found the special page for which he was seeking.

"Now, here it says: 'George Washington was born at the old homestead

of Wakefield, in Westmoreland County, in Eastern Virginia. He was the oldest child of a family of six children —George, Betty, Samuel, John Augustine, Charles, and Mildred. The latter died in infancy.' "

"Oh, we know all that, George, so don't lose time reading it. We want to start the play!" cried Martha, who felt impatient at being obliged to listen to her brother's expressionless reading.

"Well, I was only going to say that one day, while good Madam Washington was raking dry grass and stubble in her garden, she thought to burn it, and in this way set fire to her home and burned it down. It says that the servants helped her fight the flames, but only succeeded in saving a few things. Now I thought we could start our fun by having Martha do that. I can be off somewhere on business—just now I am Mary Washington's husband, you know, and John will have to play George, the son. What do you say?" and George watched the growing en-

thusiasm in the faces of his audience.

"O-oh, say, George, can't we go down to the back fence and build a shack or something? Then Martha can really rake the dry weeds and stuff left in the vegetable garden, and when we burn it in a bonfire we can burn the house, too!" exclaimed John, ever ready for mischief.

"Of course! That is what I expect to do!" returned George, who never admitted that any one ever thought of a brilliant plan that he too had not had the same inspiration.

"Come on, Martha—let's hurry!" urged John, now imbued with the idea of having a big bonfire.

The three children started off for the extreme end of the property where the high picket fence divided the Parke truck garden from that of the Graham place. They had not gone more than a dozen yards, however, before a shrill whistle came from the area leading from the basement of the house.

"Whar yuh goin'?" called a pickaninny eagerly.

"Goin' to play Washingtons!" shouted John.

"Kin Ah come an' play?" begged the bow-legged little Jim, running as fast as he could across the grass.

"Oh, say, George, we got to have a servant, you know, to help Madam Washington put out the fire!" exclaimed John, turning to George.

At that, George turned and called to Jim, "Yes, I was jus' thinking of sending for you to come and play."

So with a wide grin that showed every glistening white tooth in his large mouth, Jim followed breathlessly after his young master.

Arrived at the place that offered such a fine site for their homestead and the destructive fire, the four children stood and looked about, then at each other.

"There's noffin to burn," remarked Jim grumblingly.

"Then we'll have to go to work and build something. You see, George Washington would never stop at such trifles!" bragged the youthful George.

"I know where there's a pile of old

bean-poles our gardener left after taking out the dry vines," ventured John.

"You do! Where?" exclaimed George and Martha in one voice.

"Do you s'pose any one wants them again? We've done with them for this year," wondered John, not quite persuaded.

"'Course not! Bean-poles aren't much account for anything, and every year we get new ones. I'm quite sure —don't we, Martha?" said George, turning to his sister to sponsor this doubtful act.

"Where do you keep them, John?" parried Martha, wishing to find out how much risk there might be in transferring them from one side of the fence to the other, before committing herself to the plan.

"I'll go and get them—if Jim will help—and we won't have to bring them over here. We can build the house right by the fence and Martha can have the fire on this side of the fence in the cornfield here," suggested John.

Now this was a wonderful idea that George could not claim as original with himself, so he objected to its possible success.

"Let's build half on your side and half on ours. We can use some of the poles and brush from our garden for this half. If you have most on your side, that can be the house, and ours can be the extension at the back of the homestead, 'cause that is always much smaller."

"Fine! Come on, Jim, and help me, while George and Martha build their kitchen end," gleefully called John, climbing over the fence as easily as if it were a ladder.

Jim scrambled after, his bent legs showing fearfully uncertain as he mounted the strong post at a section of the fence. Soon the two were out of sight behind the still standing high corn-stalks, and George with his sister began to collect the brush that had been used for the peas that season.

After many trips to and from the garden, loaded with tiresome burdens of

brush and bean-poles, all four patriotic plotters met again at the fence-post to discuss further developments.

"Now we've got everything, how are we going to build the house?" queried John.

"I guess I'll have to go to the tool-house and get a shovel and some string. We'll have to have string to tie on the roof and sides of the house, you know," ventured George.

"Ah got a hank o' yarn," offered Jim, taking a snarled bunch of knitting wool from his loose breeches pocket.

"Good! Here, Martha, you sit down and unravel this tangle while I go to the tool-house. Say, John, why can't you get a shovel and pick, too? We've got to stick those poles in the ground, you know, to tie the brush on afterward," said George.

"Why can't we use the fence for a wall and lean the poles up against it from both sides? Then the brush can be stuck in between the poles. What difference will it make whether the house is up straight or leans against

somethin' as long as it is goin' to burn down?" argued John.

"If we have a homestead, we're going to have a good one. It will make our sorrow deeper if we lose the home so unexpectedly through the carelessness of Martha," replied George, which spoke well for his innate desire to do everything well.

"I wasn't careless at all! It was an accident. The book says: 'Madam Washington was clearing away the trash from her garden when in some way'—maybe the wind blew a spark inside a window—'the homestead caught fire.' Now I won't play if you make me burn it down through carelessness!" pouted Martha.

"Oh, don't get cross, Martha! Have it happen any way you like, only let's hurry and build the house or it'll be dark before we have a fire!" cried John impatiently.

So Martha sat down to do the impossible—unravel the snarl of Jim's yarn—and two of the boys ran to the Grahams' barn, while George hurried

to his father's shed for the necessary implements with which to work.

Work as fast and as hard as they could, it took all the rest of the afternoon to dig holes and firmly place enough bean-poles in a square on both sides of the fence to make the walls of the house. Then the roof had to be fastened on. For this, the picket fence provided a splendid resting-place. It was used as the ridge-pole, the bean-poles leaning on it on both sides of the house, and slanting down to the poles of the side-walls. The roof-poles were tied with twine, yarn, manila rope, white string and any other material the boys had found in the barns.

"Now we're ready for the brush-wood. I wish we had wood to use, it would look so much more real," said George, admiring the frame-work of the homestead to be.

"Oh, don't waste time wishing that! Come along and work," exclaimed John.

The brush was stuck in between the poles and placed on the roof, when

the supper-bell was heard ringing from the back porch.

"Oh, pshaw! We can't burn the house to-night!" sighed John.

"I know what! Let's bring some furniture here, and Martha can have her dolls and doll furniture to-morrow afternoon. Maybe Jim can get a sprinkling-pot or some pans for us to use in trying to put out the fire. If the dolls are sleeping in the house, and we have to rush in to save their lives, it will make all the more fun. What do you say?" cried George.

"Just the thing if Martha will do it," added John eagerly.

"Of course I will, but you must promise to save them all," agreed Martha anxiously.

"That's just what we intend doing! While Jim saves the furniture, and John runs with water, I will go bravely in and bring out the children safely. Then you all must say how noble I am, and that some day I will be a great hero—see?"

Evidently John saw, for he sulked

as he grumbled "good night," feeling envious of the coming hero. And Jim felt very much awed at the tones and manners of his young master, while Martha, her motherly instinct for the dolls' safety uppermost, ran back to the house with fearful forebodings in her breast.

CHAPTER II

WASHINGTON'S HOMESTEAD BURNS DOWN

"CHILDREN, what is the matter with you to-day? I have tried to hear your lessons all morning, but you persist in mumbling about Washington's boyhood experiences instead of reciting correctly the chapter of the Civil War, which I wished you to memorize!" exclaimed Mrs. Parke, as the two scholars sat in her morning-room with school-books opened before them.

"Mother, it must be the lovely autumn weather that's got into our system. Could you sit and study when everything was so wonderful outdoors?" said George, looking longingly at the back lawn.

Mrs. Parke laughed, but she replied, "I will certainly be glad when the rainy season comes, in October, and

with it your teacher. Then you'll have to attend to school hours instead of wheedling mother into excusing you from lessons because the day is so fine!"

"Does that mean we may go?" cried Martha eagerly.

"Yes, for this once more. It is almost luncheon time, anyway," said Mrs. Parke apologetically to herself.

It was not two moments thereafter that both George and Martha were out of the cheerful room and flying through the hall.

"Got your dolls?" called George.

"Yes, and the cradle and bureau with their clothes are on the back porch," responded Martha, as she ran to her room for a gingham bungalow apron that would serve for a long dress, in which to play her part.

"Leave everything on the porch and we'll hurry through lunch first," ordered George, as he piled a broken chair, a legless table, and several pieces of broken crockery under the steps of the rear piazza.

Luncheon over, the two children crept down the area steps to reconnoiter for Jim. The latter, sitting on a stool eating his bread and milk, lost no time in gobbling the last few spoonfuls and running after the two beckoning tempters.

"Ise foun' a scrub-pail wid a hole in its bottom, an' mammy give me a leaky quart measure she kep' garden seasonin' in in de pantry. Heah dey am—unner de lilac bushes," whispered Jim, looking timidly over his shoulder for fear his mammy might hear and suspect the awful plot.

Laden with furniture, fire-apparatus, and children, the three early settlers ran across the grass to the comparative protection of the hedge that bounded the wide pathway to the barns. But once out of sight of the house and the alert kitchen-folk, the three arch-plotters again crossed the grass to avoid the watchful eyes of Mose, the gardener.

"Ah," sighed George, as they found the newly-built homestead as they had left it the night before.

"It looks kind of queer in daylight!" commented Martha, who had been picturing the wonderful building to herself ever since they left it in the twilight when all things appear better than they do in the glare of the sunshine.

"Queer! I don't see why!" defended George, who was annoyed at his own silent criticism of the building.

"It looks jus' lak a brush pig-sty my daddy built fer Grahams' farm, las' yar," ventured Jim.

Had not a cat-call announced John Graham's approach, it is hard to say what might have happened to weak-kneed little Jim at his daring comparison. But John came panting to the fence, burdened with various articles, prominent in the medley being a remnant of lace curtain.

"I got this to hang on a window, so we can throw a burning stick in, and ketch the lace on fire!" explained John, taking the old piece of net and holding it at one of the many apertures made by the scarcity of brush covering the poles.

"Just the thing!" declared George, as he revelled over an empty scabbard, broken and useless, but fine for a man to use when riding through a forest filled with hostile Indians.

"An' this old pistol I found on the library wall, is a relic of the Revolution, pa said one day to a visitor. I knew it was just what I could use to warn our neighbors that we need help," explained John.

"I'd better use the pistol, too, 'cause if you're George Washington when he was a boy, you couldn't handle firearms, you know," ventured George, doubtful of the reception his suggestion would have.

"I just guess not! I had to climb up the mantel in the library for it when no one was around, and then hide it under my bed-sheet all night, so's I could bring it here to use. Now I'm not going to let you play with it!" cried John emphatically.

"Oh, all right, then, if you think young Washington acted like that to his father! Why, every one knows he

was so good and obedient that his father said he was a model son," argued George.

"Well, I'm not George and I got the pistol, so there!"

"Boys, please stop fussing and let's play! My dolls and furniture are waiting in the homestead," said Martha, as she came from the impromptu home, leaving the children inside waiting for the fiery ordeal.

"Da's what Ah say, too, bo's!" grumbled Jim, who had great expectations of running madly from the pump near the barn with his pail of water to put out the fire of the burning house.

"Come along, then," said George, taking a length of twine from the fence to fasten the scabbard about his waist.

"Now, Martha, you must be in the house when I come up and talk. Jim can be working in the garden and John can be saying good-by before he rides to the town for mail, or somethin'!" directed George.

"Remember, you must try to save the children and the house, Jim, the min-

ute you see the fire start. You see, I am very calm and self-possessed, so I won't cry for help or even call 'Fire!' Now don't forget you're a slave, and will do all you can to save the property," admonished Martha, shaking a finger at the awed Jim.

"Yas'sam!" gasped Jim, bobbing his head as he had seen his granddaddy do to the elders of the Parke household.

Martha crept in under the opening in the bean-poles that was politely termed the "doorway," and then sat down to rock the cradle holding her five dolls.

Jim was sent to dig and rake in the stubble near the brush house, and young George came up to speak to Madam Washington. Just as he crept inside the place, Martha said: "Oh, dear me! Who remembered to bring a match to start the bonfire in the garden?"

No one had, so John said: "I'll gallop on my make-believe horse to the house and see if I can't find some in the hallway."

"Well, then hurry up, or all our fun will be spoilt!" said George.

While John was absent, Martha arranged the interior of the house, placing the dilapidated articles of furniture in the scant space provided for them, but the cradle holding the dolls she left standing near the fence-post that held up the entire pole building. Had she been more experienced, she would have placed the cradle near the open door where Jim could quickly rescue the children, leaving the furniture for a second trial.

George and Jim piled up a great heap of dried corn-stalks and pea-vines, also some pole-bean vines dry and brittle and very inflammable. Then John was seen running back along the worn foot-path beside the fence, until he reached the place where the boys generally scaled the dividing line from each other's properties.

"I got two—all I could find! These were on the stand where the girl must have left them last night, after lighting the hall gas," cried John breathlessly.

"Now, all ready—I will say good-by to Madam Washington and leave for the business with the Indians," said George, as he stopped at the doorway to wave his hand at Martha.

"Good-by, Mr. Washington—and do come back soon," giggled Martha, watching George leave the homestead and climb on the high fence where he played he was riding a horse away from the farm.

Now Martha came out and called to Jim, "The children are sleeping, so I will clean up the yard."

Thus saying, she turned to laugh at John who was waiting behind a tree to see the fun begin.

She took the rake and cleared up some dry grass and leaves, then sent Jim indoors to pretend he was working in the kitchen. Obedient as usual, Jim did as Martha ordered and sat cross-legged on the ground waiting for other orders.

Martha struck the match and lit the bonfire, but so swiftly did the fire lick up the dry stubble and leaves that she

could not reach out for a bit of burning wood to fling in at the lace curtain. Instead, great fragments of flaring tinder blew directly over the brush house, instantly igniting the dry twigs and the corn-stalks that had been placed on the roof.

"Oh, oh!" screamed Martha, thoroughly frightened, "save the dolls and the cradle—some one—quick, quick!"

John stood petrified by the tree, and George, who had jumped from the fence when Martha was ready to light the bonfire, had hidden back of John's corn-bunched stalks, since he was supposed to be away.

"Whar am dey, Miss Marfa?" cried a little coughing voice from under the burning roof.

"Oh, oh, sakes alive! Jim's in that fire!" screamed Martha, clutching wildly at her hair, and dancing up and down in a frenzy.

"What—oh, what can we do? Jim! Jim! can't you come out of that hole?" yelled John, when he found the doorway had collapsed.

"I'se lookin' fer Miss Marfa's chilluns! It's so smoky Ah cain't see nuffin!" wheezed Jim.

"Come out—come out! Oh, come out, Jim! Never mind the dolls!" cried Martha hysterically, running back and forth as near the hot fire as she dared.

Now George had heard his sister's first terrified call but thought she was pretending, so he laughed to himself at the great fun they were having. But the moment he heard John's distressed yell, he knew something had gone wrong, so he ran out and saw the red-hot fire which was wreathing the homestead.

He scrambled over the fence, tearing a great rent in his clothing as he did so, and rushed up in time to hear Martha scream for Jim to come out. Instantly realizing what had taken place, George looked about, but saw no other way to run in and try to save his "slave."

With not a thought for his own safety, George tore away some of the brush still unignited and forced his way between the bean-poles. Jim stood

holding the dolls tightly clasped in his arms, coughing violently and eyes shut tight with the smart of the smoke and heat.

George grabbed him, and pushing him toward the opening he had forced, shoved the rescuer of "the children" out through the aperture. John, as brave as George, but not with the same presence of mind, rushed up and caught hold of Jim just as he stumbled blindly over a burning pole and would have fallen.

George managed to get out after Jim, but the brush was already burning, and he singed his hair and hands in trying to ward off falling flares of fire from the roof.

The dolls' fluffy dresses were burning as John half-dragged Jim out of the danger zone. Martha snatched the burning toys away from Jim's spasmodic hold, and threw them on the ground far enough away to let them burn without risk to anything more valuable.

George knew enough to smother his

smoking hair with his coat, which he had quickly pulled off. But his blistered hands were so painful that he almost cried out with agony as he managed to whip out the creeping fire with his coat, when he saw the menace to the dry corn-field, and possibly to the barn, all filled with hay and fodder for the winter.

But the children had forgotten that the bean-pole homestead was built about the fence, until they turned from the more urgent needs of keeping the fire from spreading, to behold the picket fence burning along rapidly and shooting sparks at the dry shrubberies and trees near the corner of the boundary lines.

"Run, George, and call Mose to help us!" cried Martha, heart-broken over the loss of her beloved dolls and the awful-looking hands her brother worked with.

"Let me run—some one take Jim home to have his mammy tie up his face and hands," shouted John, off like a rocket.

George remained alone, still beating with his now shred of a coat, at every shooting flame that tried to get at the dry stubble in the garden.

But the families of both houses had seen the column of smoke and had heard the excited cries of the children as the fire so unexpectedly licked up everything about them, and every one, from the baby to grandma, ran to the scene where the smoke rose.

With hand-grenades, water buckets, a garden-hose, and every possible device for extinguishing a fire, both families worked and advised until the fence was merely a blackened line of ashes. Several of the fine old trees had suffered severe scorching, and the shrubs were completely destroyed by the fire.

Besides these casualties, George was badly burned, Jim's woolly pate was crisped so that the short, tight curls came off in his mammy's hand, and John and Martha were burned here and there by flying brands. The family of pet dolls, the cradle and bureau of

dresses were mere memories for Martha; and to cap the climax, the four would-be actors in history were sternly reproved and punished for days following, by keeping them apart.

Mr. Graham found the old horse-pistol on the ground behind the tree where John had dropped it in his fright, when Martha screamed for help to save Jim, and he shook his head, murmuring as he did so:

"I wish I could impress these children with the danger of playing with firearms and make-believe fires. Of course this antique pistol is not loaded, but they were not aware of that."

Then Mr. Parke called upon Mr. Graham the night of the fire and had a serious talk with him.

"Really, Graham, I am at my wits' ends about those children. Why, not only could they have set fire to the barns and other out-houses, but little Jim might have been roasted alive in that brush heap if George hadn't risked his own safety to rescue him."

"I have been thinking over the cir-

cumstances, Parke, and I find that these children are about the same as we were when we were young, only they play with fire and guns and we played robbers and Indians. One is as bad as the other when it comes to danger of life and limb, and at this advanced day, youngsters ought to be taught the hazards of such fun. Now, how did John know that gun was safe to play with? Might it not have been loaded or stuffed with an old load that would have exploded accidentally and caused great harm?"

"Well, I must begin to teach the children the great risk of playing with matches, or starting bonfires, as both are so dangerous. The only proper place for fire is in a stove or when carefully watched by expert grown-ups. And as for matches! Well, no child ought to be permitted to handle them at all, as they begin to feel too familiar with the treacherous little stick. Just see all the pain and trouble caused by having two stray matches on the hall table," added the other man.

So the result of the fire was, that not only did the parents take greater care in teaching the children not to touch matches, firearms, or fire of any kind, but the servants, also, were warned about carelessly leaving anything around that might tempt children to have a "make-believe" fire.

CHAPTER III

PUNISHMENTS AND LESSONS

"MOTHER, aren't you going to let us play the Washingtons any more?" asked George plaintively, while his hands were still bandaged, and the missing eye-brows and hair made his face look very queer and pathetic.

"I'm sure I don't know what to say to that. If you would but keep within reasonable bounds of your patriotism, there would be no objection to your playing Washington as much as you like, but such capers as playing Madam Washington burning down her homestead is beyond my endurance! Poor little Jim had nothing to do with the plan, yet he suffered as much as you, by doing exactly as you all advised him," replied Mrs. Parke severely.

"Well, I remember father read from the Bible the other evening at prayers, that 'the rain fell on both the just and the unjust,' so what can we do when the Bible tells us that?" questioned Martha.

Mrs. Parke could not reply to that great stumbling-block of most theologians, so she changed the subject rather abruptly.

"Now, for to-day, I intend reading of Washington's days directly after his father had passed away. Listen, children:

" 'The death of Augustine Washington'—that is George's father, you know, children—'in 1743, when George was but eleven years old, broke up the happy Wakefield life and left Madam Washington a widow at thirty-five with a family of four sons and one daughter, besides the two sons of her husband's first marriage to Jane Butler.

" 'An earnest, serious, yet delightful boyhood was that of young George Washington. And as he grew older, he passed from the studies at his moth-

er's knee to those of the old sexton, Master Hobby, and later to the old field-academy near Fredericksburg.

" 'But Washington never had the benefits of an education such as Jefferson and Madison enjoyed. Latin and French were practically unknown to the schoolboy, whose bent of mind was thus entirely turned to mathematics and the studies growing out of a sound foundation in this important science of numbers.

" 'Thus it happened naturally, that Washington should turn to the study of surveying, not only because his family owned such large parcels of ground, but because it was most remunerative at that day.

" 'In the same way, Thomas Jefferson, Rogers Clark, and John Adams—not to mention Franklin—directed their early opportunities to surveying, that brings such precision of habits and practice in the study and application of the science of civil engineering.' "

"Mother, when I am old enough I am going to study that—surveying, you

know, just as my Washington did!" cried George, as he enthused at that part of Mrs. Parke's reading.

"I trust you will, son, as it is a wonderful profession. Not only can you become close friends with Nature—her flowers, forests, fields, streams and mountain peaks, but also you can visit great cities, plan the lines of towering structures, examine the space occupied by square or diagonal city 'blocks,' and do many other interesting things that one seldom thinks of in other businesses or professions," replied Mrs. Parke encouragingly.

"Oh, don't interrupt mother again, George—I want to hear what became of Madam Washington when she was left alone to bring up that large family," complained Martha.

"Very well, I will continue. 'Lewis Willis, a cousin and schoolmate of Washington's, was two years younger than the great general. He wrote in his diary, that George generally stood at the board ciphering when the other boys were out playing games. It is

also written that this great soldier never had a fight while at school, but was often called upon to arbitrate with other quarrelsome boys.

"'In this school, where boys and girls alike were taught, Washington learned 110 rules of civility which he later wrote in a private book of his own. And the greatest rule of these he considered to be the one that influenced his life and became the lamp that shed light on his future pathway:

"'Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

"'Now Lawrence Washington's influence in the family and outside circles, impelled him to select the navy as a profession for his brother George, to whom he was especially devoted. So, when the boy was fourteen, a midshipman's warrant was obtained for him, and every preparation made for his departure on the ship which lay at anchor in the Potomac. But Madam Washington's anguish and disapproval of this plan brought a letter from their

uncle, John Ball, breaking up the arrangement, and George obediently followed his uncle's advice.

" 'After this, George was brought to the notice of Lord Fairfax, who owned the vast territory westward over the Blue Ridge, unsurveyed and trackless. When the young student was engaged to explore and survey this domain, he took the greatest delight in his figuring, planning and surveying.

" 'When George was sixteen he was surveying at seven pistoles per day. And at hours of rest and recreation, he roamed the primeval forests and romanced in dreams. Thus was formed the prologue of "Idylls of the Summer Isles." ' "

"Oh, mother, don't waste any more time reading about the dry things in Washington's life!" objected Martha, at this point in the story. "Tell us something about his love affairs with Martha Custis."

"Or his wars and fighting," added the boy George.

"Children, you forget that this is a

punish reading. I must not read anything more exciting to you than these pages intimate, or you will be planning to do likewise, while your faces and hands are still bandaged up from your last experiment," rebuked Mrs. Parke. Then she continued:

"'Washington followed the instruction of his 108th rule, which was: "Honor your natural parents though they be poor." And even when he associated intimately with the aristocracy at Lord Fairfax's home, he was most devoted, reverential, and gracious to his mother who was widowed, poor, and ignorant in the ways of the day.

"'The rules that influenced the soldier's after life were neatly written and carefully preserved in a manuscript book, and among them the following are the ones he favored most, and show the principles upon which Washington built his character:

"'1. Every action in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those present.

"'2. Be no flatterer.

"'3. Let your countenance be pleasant; but in serious matters, somewhat grave.

"'4. Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he were your enemy.

"'5. When you meet with one of greater quality than yourself, stop and retire; especially, if it be at a door, or any strait place, to give way for him to pass.

"'6. They that are in dignity or in office, have in all places precedency; but whilst they are young they ought to respect those that are their equals in birth, or other qualities, though they have no public charge.'"

"Oh, dear me!" sounded woefully from George, who sat by the open window, with legs stretched out wearily before him.

"What is wrong, son?" asked Mrs. Parke, trying to hide a smile.

"Those dreadful rules again! I wish the great Washington had never written them, or had tried to follow his own advice in them!" sighed George, while

Martha, also weary of the wholesome mental chastisements, nodded an energetic approval of her brother's words.

"But just think, George, what a wonderful character the New World would have lost if Washington had felt about these rules of conduct as you and Martha do," argued Mrs. Parke.

"But I say, mother, it is bad enough to have both hands tied up in cotton so's a fellow can't do a thing, without having to listen to the goody-goodness of Washington's boyhood. Can't you read about his wars, or at least about his visits to the Red Men?" begged George.

"I must complete the reading of this list of rules first, as it is your daily sum of correction for past errors," replied the mother, holding the book up so the two culprits couldn't see the gleam of sympathy in her eyes.

"'7. It is good manners to prefer them to whom we speak before ourselves; especially, if they be above us, with whom in no sort we ought to begin.

"'8. Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive.

"'9. In writing or speaking, give to every person his due title, according to his degree and the custom of the place.

"'10. Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgment to others with modesty.

"'11. Undertake not to teach your equal in the art he himself professes. It savors to arrogancy.

"'12. When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.

"'13. Being to advise, or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be done in public or in private, presently or at some other time, in what terms to do it; and in reproving, show no signs of choler, but do it with sweetness and mildness.'"

"There now, mother! We have the great Washington's own advice about this punishment business!" cried Martha, who was pretty well acquainted

with the rules, so often necessary to be read to the two of them that she knew when this section was read.

"Yes, indeed, mother. We ought to consider carefully whether this is the right time to reprove Martha and me. I say that if Washington knew of this particular case, he would advise you to defer longer punishment to another time and place," added George eagerly.

"Ah, my children! hear the following rule of our Immortal Hero's fourteen: 'Take all admonition thankfully, in what time or place soever given; but afterward, not being culpable, take a time or place convenient to let him know it that gave it.' "

"Why, mother, that means you—not us! It says 'take all admonition thankfully.' Now Martha and I advised you well, so you ought to be thankful to us, but if you have any explanations to make, try to make an opportunity sometime later to tell us about it," said George, rising from the armchair and politely standing to await his mother's exit.

Mrs. Parke, tremendously amused at the children's interpretation of the "rules," rose also, and, not exactly sure of the best thing to do at that moment, left the room, bowing first to Martha and then to George.

The children, as taught, made a curtsey to their mother, and then sat down to look hopelessly at each other.

"Well, we won't have to listen to those dreadful rules any more to-day!" sighed Martha.

"Yes, but at what a loss. Mother went with the rules, you see," complained George.

"Well, why did you stand when you did?" asked Martha.

George plumped himself down again in the soft, springy chairseat and frowned at the table. He appeared not to have heard a word of Martha's prompt rebuke.

Before either could offer any plan for the long, tiresome hours of the afternoon, with mother gone to the baby in the nursery, a "hist" came from under the wide window opening directly

over the flowerbeds at the side of the house.

Martha jumped up to see who it was, but Jim's closely-shaven head bobbed up into sight and a dangerous grin spread across his face, which threatened to meet back of his ears at the risk of having the top of his head topple off.

"I'se got a hunk uv chockerlate cake me mammy gi' me!"

"O-oh, Jimmy! is it big enough for us, too?" whispered Martha eagerly.

"Uh-huh! An' I'se got a fine piksher book dat shows de general ridin' a hoss—he's all traipsed out wid gol' lace an' an orful big sword slashin' by his side!" the little pickaninny informed his interested audience.

"Where is it?" asked George, showing more animation than he had had all day.

"Where'd you get it?" asked the curious Martha.

"I'se got him all right—heah!" and Jim began to struggle with the length of string that was wound about certain

loose China buttons which were meant to hold the old shirt together. After unwinding the maze so that he could open the doubled-over bosom shirt handed down from his daddy, the two eager faces leaning from the window saw a highly-colored paper book reposing against Jim's red flannel shirt.

"Heah hit is! Ain't them colors jus' too bufool for ennyting? Yer gran'ma gi' hit to me 'cause she said Ah was a good lil' boy an' loss ma har fer nuttin'. Gee, Mas'er Garge, Ah'd loose it agin ef Ah had enny more, fer anudder book lak dis!" cried Jim, rolling his eyes back in ecstasy until Martha gasped for fear they would never roll back in place again.

"Wait a second where you are, Jim —I'm coming out to look at it!" exclaimed George, jumping from the window-sill and running toward the door.

"Me, too, Jim!" cried Martha excitedly, following after her brother.

As there had been no ban placed on the children's going freely in or out as they pleased, they met outside the

window, and all three walked over to the lilac bushes, where a rustic bench offered a suitable place to sit and admire the pictures.

As they walked over the grass George felt it necessary to apologize for taking the time to come out of the natural exit of the house instead of clearing the window-sill and landing on the ground.

"You see, I can't support myself anywhere, 'cause my hands hurt so when I touch anything—that is why I had to walk out on my feet like girls do!"

The last remark was said so humbly that Martha hadn't the heart to scold him for saying unkind things about girls.

By crowding closely together, the three could sit on the bench, so Jim was given the middle place, as he held the book that would reveal new deeds of valor and wonders to the two devoted admirers of the famous general.

As page after page turned slowly to display the gorgeously tinted pic-

tures, George formed the beginning of another plan for acting the life of Washington. And Martha sighed as she wished she were Jim, to be the possessor of such a lovely picture-book!

CHAPTER IV

GEORGE PLANS A SURVEY EXPEDITION

THE pictures in Jim's book lured George's ever-ready fancy to picturing an expedition to some woods a few miles from his home, but he had no excuse for this trip other than it would give him practise in surveying the lands passed through. But the week following the reading of the rules and precepts from Washington's journal, Mrs. Parke read some very interesting data and that was all George needed to construct a plausible escapade.

Mrs. Parke had read: "'At sixteen the precocious lad was sent on an important mission, and the interesting details are set forth in his own writing from the diary he kept systematically.

"'He went in company with George Fairfax, Esquire, and an expert sur-

veyor, over the Blue Ridge mountains to Captain Ashby's place on the Shenandoah River.

" 'Sunday they rode up the river, passing through beautiful groves of sugar trees, and over most fertile fields. For some days following, they traveled onward till the river was found to be so high from heavy rains that it was not passable, it being six feet higher than usual.

" 'After a delay of a few days, and the river not abating, the surveyors swam their horses across the stream and left them at a friend's for pasturage. The party then continued in a canoe up the Maryland side of the river.

" 'The rain and freshets continued and detained the surveyors at Cresaps. There they were surprised by a party of thirty Indians coming from a battle with but one scalp. The white men gave the Red Men some of their liquor, which made the Indians dance for them in return.

" 'They cleared a large circle and built a big fire in the middle. They

then sat about it in a ring while one of them made a fine speech, telling his warriors what and how to dance. Then the best dancer of all jumped up and ran about the fire in a very strange manner, the others joining in the dance and following after the leader. To the music of a skin drum and a gourd filled with shot for a rattle, they danced wild and fearful ways.' "

When Mrs. Parke read this paragraph, George made a mental note for future use. But to the description of how Washington slept on some straw which caught fire, so that the crude mattress had to be thrown into the river, George remained impervious. He thought to himself: "We've had one good fire and that's enough to do for all time."

When his mother read of the fine wild turkeys shot down or trapped, George made another mental note—not including a gun, for he had also had enough of lectures about firearms, but trapping was different!

At the paragraph where the young

surveyor spoke of the night's camp in a fine meadow where some hay had been stacked up, and the description of how the men cooked supper, and then after spreading out some hay for bedding, enjoyed a well-earned rest, George felt very deeply interested.

By the time the swaddling cotton and linen bandages were removed from George's hands, he had another full-fledged plan in mind, all ready and waiting for the opportunity to try it.

It happened that John Graham was released from strict imprisonment within his home grounds, and given parole of the gardens and lawns back of the house.

Jim had wandered aimlessly over the entire estate during the days of George's forced quiet withindoors, and during one of these roamings he heard John's whistle and saw the boy running across the garden to meet him at the place where the high picket fence had stood. It was temporarily replaced by a ribbon wire.

This offered no obstacle whatever to

youth, so John was soon over on the Parkes' property asking eagerly for George and Martha. Jim faithfully repeated the method of punishment, as he had heard it read from the history book each day, as he crouched under the wide window waiting for Mrs. Parke to finish and leave the children alone.

John listened in wonderment. "I wish I had some one punish me that way—I'd like it."

"No'm-mm! you wouldn't uther!" retorted Jim, making a very significant sound on the first word.

"Why?" giggled John.

"Cuz! Dem rules an' regerlations what dat Washerton said is as bad to recomember as de Proverbs in granny's Good Book!" declared Jim, rolling his eyes upward at mention of the Book that could open the door of Heaven for bad boys.

"I wish you'd see if any one's about the house—I'd take a chance of seein' George if he was alone!" whispered John, looking about fearfully to see if any one could overhear him.

"Ah'd let it go by, John, ef Ah wuz yuh! Lemme tell Garge you'se is waitin' at de back fence—leastwise whar de fence 'ust to be onct!" corrected honest Jim.

"Yeh—do that and hurry up! I'll stay around by the shrubs over there for ten minutes anyway," declared John, starting off.

When Jim approached the window of the room where the two Parke children were wont to sit and do penance for the fire, he heard Mrs. Parke say:

"So you will have to be good children until I come back. Mammy has been given full charge of you, and you must do all you can to make the task light for her."

"Oh, we will, mother! Trust me. I hate to make any work or extra care for mammy, and she will be able to tell you how nice her days were while you were away in Washington," eagerly agreed George and Martha as one voice. In fact, so anxious were they to assure their mother of the care and trouble they would spare the watch-

ful mammy that Mrs. Parke wondered if there could be a deeper meaning underlying the consent.

As Jim heard the door close, and felt assured the lady had gone from the room, he gave his low, peculiar whistle that immediately brought the two damaged but almost mended children to the window.

"John, he am waitin' nigh de bushes war de fiah wuz!" Jim informed his young friends.

"What for?" countered Martha.

"Just to visit us, I s'pose—anyway, let's run out and see him for a minute," suggested George.

Without losing time to go by the roundabout way of the door, both children leaped from the window—George's hands being healed well enough to use again.

Jim grinned at the sight of that meeting—it was as if three long-lost friends had suddenly found each other again.

"I've got great news, John!" cried George, as soon as the first greetings were over.

"Have you?—so've I. I just heard my mother 'phone my father that everything was nicely arranged to start tomorrow. She then said that Mrs. Parke would be able to accompany her. Now where do you suppose they are going?" said John.

"Ha! That's what I want to tell you. Our folks—that is mother and father—are going to Washington for a week. Your father and mother are going with 'em. You are going to be left in charge of your uncle, who will stay at your house, and we are to be left with our mammy."

George waited to see the effect of his words on John, but he never expected to see such wild enthusiasm as his friend expressed at the news.

"Sh-h! Some one'll hear you and then they won't go!" cried Martha fearfully.

This silenced John more effectively than any other warning could have done. When other explanations had been made, and the four children had sworn each other to secrecy to encour-

age George to divulge his plans, he said:

"I thought it all out while mother was reading about our Washington's experiences in surveying on the mountains. Now I know all about some mountains not far from here, and my plan will not only save mammy a lot of care and trouble, but do us a lot of good for future business—I expect to be a surveyor, you know!"

The other children conceded the expected fame of their future expert with a transit and other instruments, and heard his plan in breathless admiration.

"You are a general that we're proud of, George," said John.

"Da's what!" echoed Jim emphatically.

"But I'm afraid it isn't right," objected Martha.

"Why not? Won't we be helping mammy take care of us?" retorted George, who feared his subjects would also retract.

"Well—maybe—but I don't like your plan of staying out," added Martha,

who was not as daring and brave as her brother.

The following morning the parents left, after leaving many admonitions for the guidance of the children and their nurse.

The elders left at nine o'clock to catch the express train for the capital, and immediately after their departure, Jim crept up from the areaway and gave the secret signal for the brother and sister.

Even before he had been able to let his lips settle into a natural line again, George and Martha came down the back steps of the porch, and all three ran over to the lilac bushes.

"Whar's mammy?" whispered Jim hoarsely, for mammy was the hoo-doo of his otherwise free and happy life. His own mammy was too busy in the kitchen cooking for the family to bother much about Jim's method of spending his time, but the elder mammy and granny were usually wide awake to the capers of the little pickaninny.

"Oh, she's in the nursery puttin' baby

to sleep after her bath," responded Martha.

Jim laughed with relief and said: "Ah got dat bread an' butter from de pantry."

"And we've got apples, potatoes and some cookies," added George.

"And I've got the blankets, but they were too heavy to carry all at once, so I brought only one pair," said Martha, displaying a huge roll under the lilac bushes.

"You two go on with these things, an' I'll go back for the other traps—we've got to have them, you know!" declared George.

Martha and Jim hurried along the hedge-bound path well hidden from the windows of the house and barn, and reached the charred trees where John stood wearily waiting.

"I thought you'd never come! I've been here since the folks left! I've got the tins and other things," said he.

"We couldn't come sooner, 'cause your folks stopped for our folks, and they never left till a little while ago—

did they, Jim?" said Martha, appealing to her companion for confirmation.

"Da's what!" assented Jim, wagging his erstwhile shiny bald head, which was beginning to show a soft fuzz of newly-grown wool.

"Well, 'all's well that ends well,'" said John.

"It isn't ended yet—and I said, remember, that I am afraid it isn't going to end well!" prophesied Martha.

"Oh say, Martha, you're a regular Jonah, you are!" said George, coming up in time to overhear his sister's remarks.

Martha, fearing that she might be left out of the expedition if she said more, remained very quiet while the three boys tied up food and tins in the blankets, and each adventurer took hold of an end of the bundle—there being two rolls of blankets and four carriers.

They left the smooth road that ran back of the two estates and trudged over a rough country road for half an hour without complaint or rest. Then Jim said:

"Ah rickon mah crooked laigs ain't jest as nimble ez your'n, Marse Garge."

From experience, Jim knew it was always wiser to appeal to George's humanitarian side of nature rather than to hint at a desired rest or lunch.

"Say, don't you two go so fast—Jim can't keep up with you, you know!" ordered George, slowing down to keep pace with Martha and the bow-legged boy.

"How much further on this trail is it, George?" asked John.

"Oh, not far. I've been hoping some cart would happen along and give us a lift," said the Commander of the Forces.

"There comes one, but it's the wrong direction," commented Martha, as a buckboard came into sight down the end of the long country road.

Another half-hour found every one tired and ready for a rest. Also, they were willing to eat up all the food brought for the entire expedition.

"We'll camp at the first spring of

water we can find," promised the general.

But no spring was found, as they seldom bubble up on a muddy road, but seek quiet, secluded nooks where they offer their sweet water to thirsty travellers.

However, when all hope in a near-by spring, and the joy of an immediate camp, was well nigh given up, a farmer drove along, his heavy wagon empty and suggestive of room.

"Say, mister, will you please give us a ride?" asked George, removing his cap politely.

"Where be you uns goin'?" asked the smiling farmer.

"Why, you see, I've got to start my business of surveying some land along here, and these, my friends, want to go with me to see what camp life is like," explained George, manlike.

"'Course you can have a lift—climb right in," replied the amused farmer.

So the band of weary wanderers thankfully sat down on the heavy wagon-flooring, and continued to ride

until the farmer turned to ask them where they wished to stop.

"Guess we'll camp at the first good spring you see," answered George, thus putting on the old man's shoulders the burden of finding water.

But the farmer merely chuckled again, thinking the four children were out for a picnic, and never dreaming that they were away from home without the consent or knowledge of their elders.

After several miles were covered, the good-natured farmer turned into a narrow road leading from the main road, and then said to the children:

"I live up the other way a stretch, but thar is a mighty fine spring of water in the woods, up har a ways. You kin camp and have a good time on that hill, and ef you want milk or any other thing, come to our house fer it—we are only a mile away."

When the wagon stopped by the woods and George, as the general of the party, was directed how to find the spring, they thanked their friend

and watched as he drove on his way. Then, as a turn of the road hid him from view they resumed their journey to the spring.

"I wonder what time it is—must be 'most night!" observed Martha.

"No, not yet—I can't tell exactly, 'cause I haven't my surveying instruments, you see. But I guess it is about one o'clock from the position of the sun and shadows," said George, squinting up at the sky with a very knowing look.

The others watched him with great admiration, and John unconsciously humbled the make-believe surveyor's conceit when he added:

"You're right, George, 'cause it was 'most one o'clock by the farmer's big silver watch when he showed it to you, you know."

"See here, John, you run to the spring and fetch us some water in the tin pail, will you?" quickly said George.

"Why, you said I was going to be Lord Fairfax on this surveying trip—

and I'm sure he never had to carry water," objected John.

"Well, then, Martha—you're a servant right now, you know; you go and get it while I see that the blankets are put away."

"George, you said I was to be one of the surveyors, so I can't be a servant, too," replied Martha, looking at Jim for the offer to serve.

"Sure you can! They all had to work on that trip in the wilds," explained George.

"Then you can get the water while I hang the blankets on a tree bough to air," responded Martha, tossing her head.

"Now let's settle this thing right here —I am Washington and in command of this trip," declared George emphatically.

"No, sir! Mother read that Lord Fairfax was the head of the expedition, and Washington was only a boy surveyor of sixteen. By rights, John ought to take command," argued Martha.

George made no reply to this, as he

was not willing to assume any other role than that of Washington, and he rebelled at any one's taking command over him, but finally said to John:

"You're Lord Fairfax, and I guess he never did anything but have a good time on these trips, so you won't have to boss or work—just be Lord Fairfax."

"Who is going for the spring water?" wondered Martha.

"Why, I will, of course! Didn't Washington always settle every dispute in school, and with the crews of men, by arbitration?" retorted George impatiently.

Jim stood humbly listening and watching these preparations, and when George took the pail and started for the water, he offered to help Martha hang the blankets over the limb of a tree.

Although Lord Fairfax was not supposed to work, he felt a keen desire to arrange the supper-table, so he spread out the newspapers and placed the tin cups and food on it before George returned with the water.

CHAPTER V

THE SURVEYOR'S CAMP

GEORGE came running back with the pail of water, but at every step the water splashed out, so that very little was left for the supper, when he reached his companions.

"What do you think! I saw a great big snake!" cried he.

"Maybe it was a rattler like the one Washington saw on the mountains just before he started for home," ventured Martha.

"Let's hurry over and kill it—where did you see it?" exclaimed John excitedly.

Jim trembled with desire or fear, no one could say, but he said: "My daddy kills 'em wid a stick!"

Armed with sticks and stones, the four surveyors began a hunt for the reptile which George assured them "was

'most four feet long and had blazing eyes!"

Jim took care to be the last in the line, and his eyes not only kept shifting from one side of the trail to the other, but he was also alert to the slightest action of the leaders.

Halfway to the spring, Martha saw a tiny green threadlike snake dart across the path, and screamed with fright.

At the moment she screamed, however, Jim stopped, bent forward to see what was wrong, and then turning like a flash, was off along the path they had all come. Martha, finding the erstwhile Indian warrior taking so fleetly to his heels, turned and followed suit.

"There it is, John! Kill him—kill him!" shouted George, jumping up and down with excitement while pointing his stick at the wriggling grass snake.

"Where? Where is he? I don't see anything!" cried John, looking in the opposite direction to that in which the snake was going.

When the snake was far enough away to be quite safe for George to fling stones at, John also turned and saw the pretty little caterpillar-eater.

"That isn't four feet long!" scorned John.

"It's 'most—you can't see the end of his tail in that long grass," disputed George.

"It isn't more'n eight inches long, and I can see it just as plain as day!" retorted John, flinging the stone he held, but aiming so badly that it fell a yard away.

The snake slid into a crevice under a rock, and the two disgusted reptile-hunters returned to camp to find that Jim had stumbled over the tin pail, and spilled the remaining water all over his cotton shirt.

"I told him to take it off and hang it in the sun while he sits behind a tree where we can't see him," explained Martha.

George had a sudden inspiration.

"If we only had some feathers, and beads, and a skin belt, Jim could play

Red Man and dance around a fire I will make."

"No, yoh won't make no fire fer me t' dance, neider! Ah got scorched one time—no moh!" exclaimed Jim, with vim.

"We haven't any matches, anyway, and—and—we don't want any more bonfires," added Martha.

"Well then, we'll eat dinner. John, you fetch some water this time while I help Jim hang up the shirt," replied George.

With an exasperated sigh that Lord Fairfax must carry water, John dragged the pail along the grass and brought water from the spring.

The four surveyors sat about the newspaper, eating all they had brought from home, then wishing there was more, as they still felt hungry.

"What are we going to have for supper and breakfast?" wondered Martha, as she looked at the raw potatoes.

"Guess we'll have to hunt up some berries in the woods," replied George.

"Berries don't grow in September—

nothing but nuts now," said John, wishing he had a slice of cake and a glass of milk as usual.

"Then we'll have to hunt for an orchard and find some apples," returned George encouragingly.

Dinner over, Martha found Jim's shirt was not yet dry, so George proposed that he play Indian for them.

"Ah don' know what dey do," Jim objected.

"I'll show you. We'll be playing camp and you must come from those bushes, bending over and holding your hand to your eyes to see who we are. When you creep up and we hail you, you come right over and exchange welcomes. We hand you the peace pipe and you sit down with us and tell us all about the war. You must have a scalplock hanging at your belt, and this you hold up as you describe the fight. Then you get up and dance, and we can make believe that we join you—although Washington and his friends really didn't do that, 'cause there were plenty of Indians to do it," said George.

"I haven't any hair for a scalp-lock," argued Jim, speaking more literally than he dreamed of.

"I can find something—the rest of you pile up some wood for a make-believe fire, while I get the scalp-lock," commanded George.

Martha, John and Jim gathered wood and brush and piled it in a heap in the center of a small cleared space, and after a short absence, George returned holding the bunched roots of a skunk-cabbage plant. When the green leaves were broken off, the dangling roots with the dotted soil clinging to them answered as well as anything else for the war-dance.

Jim tucked the scalp-lock in his rope-belt, and hid behind the bushes. The other three sat down about the heap of wood, and at a signal the Indian crept out, while George rose and looked about at the landscape.

"Methinks I hear some crackling of brush, my lord," declared he.

Martha giggled and John jumped up. 'Ah! yonder comes a forest man!"

cried he, leaning forward to peer at the bushes.

George turned then, and both boys stood proudly waiting for the Indian to come forward. Martha, too intent on watching the boys, forgot to get up from the grass.

"What brings my brother to our camp?" asked George, with a grand air.

"Ah jus' finished scalpin' five thousand enemies, Mr. Washerton, an' Ah fought yu'd like t' see de ha'r Ah chopt off!" replied Jim, hop-stepping to the circle.

"Get up, Martha—can't you see we men don't know what the Indian will do, so we must be ready to fight?" hoarsely whispered George to his sister.

Martha quickly jumped up with a repentant air, and Jim joined the white men at their campfire. John grinned as Jim held out the muddy roots of the cabbage and said:

"Ah los' mah way affer dat fight, 'cuz Ah had t' run lak fury t' git away from dem fierce enemy. Ah could'en stop t'

cut no moh scalps off, or Ah'd ben shot full uv arrers. So heah Ah am wid de tropee."

"We welcome you to our fire, brother, and ask you to dance for us," said George, with a serious bow.

"You forgot the pipe—hurry up and find a pipe, some one!" prompted John, looking about in the ground for a suitable stick.

All four sought eagerly until a stick with a notch was found, and this was handed to Jim with explanations.

"You have to invite us to smoke a pipe of peace with you before we sit down at the fire."

Jim had often played Indian with the boys at home, so he took the pipe, puffed several times loudly at the one end, and made his bows to the four winds and the four corners of the earth, then to the Great Spirit; then he passed it to Lord Fairfax.

John puffed the same way and passed it to George. When the latter had puffed he passed it to Martha, and she puffed and passed it to Jim again. Then

the pipe was placed upon a spread-out paper (as a substitute for a blanket) and the Red Man was ready to dance.

John banged the bottom of the tin pail for a drum, Martha shook some pebbles in her cup for a rattle, and George and Jim started the war-dance. With wild shouts of victory and frantic gestures of the fight, the two warriors went circling about the fire to the music of the tins.

Not until all were hoarse from shouting and laughing, and limbs as well as breath gave out, did the Indians stop to fall upon the grass and roll over in satisfaction.

"That was the best war-dance we ever had," John said.

"It takes the forest and camp life to make it good," explained George.

"What now?" asked Martha, who was not as exhausted as the others.

"I guess we'll have to hunt a bear for steaks, or a buck for venison," suggested George, looking for the sun that he might guess the time of day.

John followed his gaze and suddenly sat up.

"Oh! look at that dark cloud!" gasped he.

All four turned eyes upward, and sure enough a heavy bank of clouds was fast hiding the blue sky and sun. At the same time, an ominous roll of thunder sounded almost overhead.

"I'm afraid of the woods when it rains," said Martha, looking anxiously about for some shelter.

"Pooh! You know that during the long survey trip of Washington's which we are pretending now, it rained so hard that they were soaked lots of times —and that is why they had to ford the river and leave their horses at some farm while they went on up the stream in canoes. This rain will make things more real," exulted George, but he ran for a blanket and began to open it for a cover.

"Mah shirt hain't dry from dat pail uv water yit. Ah don' wan'ta git all wet inside on dis red flannerl!" complained Jim.

"I'll tell you what! Let's roll us up in the two blankets and sit under that big oak tree," suggested John, seeing George appropriate one whole blanket for himself.

"You mustn't sit under a tree in a thunder storm—it's sure to be hit by lightning when you're under it!" cried Martha.

"Mah mammy says t' find rosin quick and smear yoh-self wid it so's the fury uv de lightnin' don' strike!" warned Jim.

"That's all bosh—good enough for girls and superstitious folks, but the real thing is that lightning strikes a high point like a tall tree, or is detracted by rosin and stuff in a pine tree. That's why a pine tree is safest in a storm," bragged George.

The three looked admiringly at the future general, and Martha said to herself: "Now, I wonder where he read that?"

Finally, the four hurried surveyors managed to hang the two blankets over a clump of alder-bushes growing near

the brook, and as the rain began falling, they crept under the canopy thus made, and sat huddled together.

Flash after flash forked back and forth through the gloom of the woods, while peal after peal of ear-splitting thunder cracked and thundered till the trembling children wished they had never come on Lord Fairfax's surveying tour.

When the storm was at its height, a lurid flash, a deafening roar, and a terrific crashing as if the forest were being torn up by the roots, made the campers all scream with one voice.

At the same time, the blankets, laden with rain-water and sagging gradually in the center so that they bent the willowy bushes over, now fell in on the frightened children, deluging them with the reservoir of water, and causing them to believe that lightning had struck them to the ground. So firm was the belief of each one, that they were all so helpless that not one dared to try and get up and grope about to find the others.

Finally George managed to throw off the soaking blanket and look about. The others also sat up and found they were all safe and sound. But the great oak tree that had offered such splendid shelter to the ignorant, was split in half —a part hanging across the boughs of other trees, and part having crashed through many tender young trees to lie on the ground, a great and mighty obstruction on the trail of the woods.

"I want to go home," said Martha, with trembling lips.

Jim had burrowed his head under the blankets again the moment he saw the terrible havoc made by the lightning, and John sat pale-faced watching George. The latter rose bravely to the trial.

"This is just the sort of thing Washington had to live through to make him the great soldier he was!"

"Well, I don't care if he did—I'm not Washington, and I never said I wanted to be a surveyor! I just said I would play Lady Washington, or Martha Custis when she was his sweet-

heart, and I'm going home now!" declared Martha.

"I'm going to see that Martha gets back safe," said John diffidently.

"Lem'me go wid yoh—Ah'm 'fraid to stay out in dis surwey camp all night!" whined Jim, twisting his head from under the blankets.

"You shan't! I'm commander, and we must stay to do just like Washington and his companions did on that trip. This thing is just what we wanted to show what stuff we were made of!" cried George, trying manfully to be courageous, but his voice showing in its quavering that he too preferred a warm, dry house with comparative safety to this wet, uncertain forest life.

"I'm Lord Fairfax, and I tell you we won't camp here any longer. I'm going to order my surveyors and servants to start for the Castle—or whatever place you say Lord Fairfax owned," said John, pulling Jim upon his shaking legs.

But the plan was not carried out as quickly and easily as Lord Fairfax

thought possible. First, the soaked blankets were very heavy and unpleasant to carry. Second, evening was coming on apace, and the children were hungry, wet, and strange in the surroundings, so it was difficult to find a way back to the muddy country road. Third, Jim kept looking over his shoulder for the "hoo-doo" with which his mammy generally frightened him into good bahavior, so that he caught his feet time and again and fell headlong in the grass or bushes.

After devious wanderings, and many protests against the briars and stubble that caught or tripped them, the four surveyors reached the dark and muddy road.

"S'pose we go to the farm-house and ask the man to take us home?" suggested George, who really felt fearful of traveling an unknown road with three tired, frightened companions.

"Oh yes, let's!" sighed Martha.

So they plunged through puddles, over hummocks of mud, and across a field of early wheat, to reach the place

where a stream of lamp-light gleamed from a farm-house window.

The kind-hearted farmer and his wife heard the pitiful tale of "Washington" and "Lord Fairfax" and, being modern farmers with telephone, electric light and other conveniences in the house, they telephoned to the homes of the wayfarers to quiet any anxiety caused by their absence.

"Your grandma says every one in your house is out hunting for you, and John Graham's father was telegraphed about your being lost. Now they will telephone again to Washington to relieve their fears in case the telegram has arrived," said the farmer, coming from the hall where the 'phone was.

A good hot supper and a warm bed —the wet clothes having been hung about the kitchen fire to dry—soon made the four surveyors feel at peace again, so that George whispered to John, his bed-fellow, that the trip was just like the one Washington and Lord Fairfax had had.

"All the same, I'll be glad to get

home again," mumbled John, half asleep.

"Why, that's just it! Didn't George Washington write in his journal that he was glad to get back home?" chuckled George.

And as George planned further experiences in the great Washington's life, John slept the sleep of the carefree Lord Fairfax, while Martha dreamed she was trailing silk and satin gowns over mud-puddles and briars, and Jim, the Indian, shot unlimited arrows and killed scores of warrior enemies.

About the same time, a telegram, a telephone message, and presentiments of mischief at home, reached the parents of the surveyors, and the following telegram was wired back to those left in charge of the two houses:

"Lock them up in a safe upper room until we return."

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST TASTE OF BATTLE

THE Parkes ended their visit to Washington some days earlier than they had at first planned, for they felt uneasy about affairs at home. When the four "surveyors" were found quite safe and restless at the enforced imprisonment in the house, they felt grateful for that much relief to their fears and presentiments.

As was customary, Mrs. Parke read again from the book the rules and precepts which were meant to guide and govern the youthful descendants of the illustrious Father of his Country:

"'15. Mock not, nor jest at anything of importance; break no jests that are sharp-biting, and if you deliver anything that is witty or pleasant, abstain from laughing thereat yourself.

"'16. Wherein you reprove another be unblamable yourself, for example is more prevalent than precepts.

"'17. Use no reproachful language against any one; neither curse or revile.

"'18. Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any.

"'19. In your apparel be modest, and endeavor to accommodate nature rather than to procure admiration; keep to the fashion of your equals, such as are civil and orderly with respect to times and places.

"'20. Play not the peacock, looking everywhere about you to see if you be well decked, if your shoes fit well, if your stockings sit neatly, and clothes handsomely.

"'21. Associate yourself with men of good quality, if you esteem your own reputation; for it is better to be alone than in bad company.

"'22. Let your conversation be without malice or envy, for it is a sign of a tractable and commendable nature; and in all cases of passion, admit reason to govern.

"'23. Utter not frivolous things among grave and learned men; nor very difficult questions or subjects among the ignorant; nor things hard to be believed.

"'24. Be not immodest in urging your friend to discover a secret.

"'25. Break not a jest where none takes pleasure in mirth; laugh not aloud, nor at all without occasion. Deride no man's misfortune, though there seem to be some cause.'"

Mrs. Parke reached this selection when George asked her pardon for interrupting the reading.

"Mother, don't you think it is much better to read a few of such precepts, and let Martha and I ponder them well, instead of filling our thoughts overfull so we can't tell what was read?"

"If I were sure of your pondering anything worth while, I might feel more inclined to read the few over and over to you, until you had memorized them. But I doubt if you would do it," replied Mrs. Parke, understanding her son's thought.

"Oh, I didn't mean for you to repeat and repeat—that would become monotonous for us all; wouldn't it, Martha?" said George anxiously.

"Yes, indeed! Just stop where you were, mother, and give us time to think over what you have read," responded Martha.

"No, do not stop there, but read some other part of American history," hinted George.

"I think I will continue the precepts," said Mrs. Parke meaningly, and the two culprits sighed and resigned themselves as well as they could to the inevitable.

"'26. Speak not injurious words, neither in jest nor in earnest; scoff at none, though they give occasion.

"'27. Be not forward, but friendly and courteous; the first to salute, hear and answer; and be not pensive when it is time to converse.

"'28. Detract not from others, neither be excessive in commending.

"'29. Go not thither, where you know not whether you shall be welcome

or not. Give not advice without being asked, and when desired do it briefly.

"'30. Reprehend not the imperfections of others; for that belongs to parents, masters and superiors.

"'31. Gaze not on the marks or blemishes of others, and ask not how they came. What you may speak in secret to your friend, deliver not before others.

"'32. When another speaks, be attentive yourself, and disturb not the audience. If a man hesitates in his words help him not, nor prompt him without being desired; interrupt him not, nor answer him till his speech be ended.

"'33. Make no comparisons; and if any of the company be commended for any brave act of virtue, commend not another for the same.

"'34. Be not apt to relate news if you know not the truth thereof. In discoursing of things you have heard, name not your author always. A secret discover not.

"'35. Undertake not what you can-

not perform, but be careful to keep your promise.

" '36. Speak not evil of the absent, for it is unjust.

" '37. Set not yourself at the upper end of the table, but if it be your due, or that the master of the house will have it so, contend not lest you should trouble the company.

" '38. When you speak of God, or His attributes, let it be seriously, in reverence. Honor and obey your natural parents, though they be poor.

" '39. Let your recreations be manful, not sinful.

" '40. Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.' "

As Mrs. Parke concluded the fortieth precept, George sat up with an eager expression and Martha heaved a profound sigh of mingled weariness and relief.

"Now, mother, read the story of the first battle!" cried George.

"I had better postpone that for the teacher to read. We expect you to start

regular lessons shortly," replied Mrs. Parke.

"Oh, but we would rather have you! You read it so *real* for us," exclaimed Martha coaxingly.

"I don't think I will read it now, but I will tell you a short story of it," answered the mother, thoughtfully weighing the possibilities of these two devoted followers of the great general being able to find anything suggestive of more mischief in what she was about to relate.

Feeling quite sure that her tale would be harmless, she began:

"The long-legged, lank, hollow-chested, awkward boy had now grown into a stalwart man, commanding-looking, powerful in physique, gracious though dignified, and in fact, as perfect and desirable a leader as could be found the world over at that time.

"He was a loyal subject of the English sovereign, and never dreamed of hostilities against the Crown, but he was, as many other English subjects, a foe to the French—the very nation that

later was to become the friend and helper of the colonists.

"When the French began trespassing on lands that the Crown called its own, it became necessary for Governor Dinwiddie to send the ablest man he could find to negotiate with the Indian tribes, and warn the French to refrain from further trespassing on English territory.

"The man selected for this arduous errand and important mission, was the young surveyor, now twenty-one years of age, who threw off the temptations of social life at his country estates, and all the delights that go with a favorite's career, to serve his colony and people at this momentous period.

"He combined a profound knowledge of Indian craft and cunning, and having heard of the machinations of the French, he started out with an impelling determination to succeed in his mission, that carried all obstacles from his pathway.

"In company with a French interpreter, a scout, and four Indian traders and servants, he started out for Ohio to con-

fer on as delicate a subject as had ever presented itself to a diplomat.

"After meeting and having council with the sachems of the Indian tribes, Washington secured help from the Red Men in safeguarding their property and their lives against the French Indians, who had taken up the 'hatchet' against them.

"Through marshes, pathless forests, over cliffs, down mountainsides, and surmounting every barrier of progress of the intrepid Commander Washington, the Red Men fought side by side with the white brothers until they reached the vicinity of Fort Duquesne, the French settlement on the site of which now is the great city of Pittsburg.

"Here Washington delivered the message from Dinwiddie, and at the same time used his apt powers to the utmost to learn the ability and energy of the French, the cunning and customs of the Indians, so that he might know just what would result from his visit to Fort Le Boeuf.

"The publication of Washington's reports roused the people to the danger menacing their country, and as the French continued their advance down the Ohio valley, the English realized that it must be stopped. But how?

"Washington described the lay of the land where the Monongahela and Alleghany rivers rushed together to form the Ohio, and he recommended the building of a fort at this site which would command the situation, making a veritable key to the West—the vast land where no white man had yet ventured.

"Governor Dinwiddie was quick to grasp the wisdom of the plan, and immediately raised and equipped two companies, of one hundred men each, Washington to command one, and William Trent the other. Orders given said that the men were to proceed at once to the establishment by the 'Ohio Company' of a fort, which would be defensive of the great grants of land to settlers, but would also act on the offensive, should any one interfere with

or resist the performance of the laws and regulations of the English.

"Washington was not in sole command of this band of 200 picked men, but an Oxford graduate named Colonel Joshua Fry. The young Virginian was second in command.

"But the expedition failed, Fry dying at Winchester, and Trent's command being surrounded and captured by Contrecœur, the French commander at the Forks, then called Duquesne in honor of the governor-general of Canada.

"This left the supreme command on Washington, now twenty-two years of age. The difficulties of the situation in trackless woods without food or ammunition, fordless rivers to cross, almost impassable forests to be hewn for trails, vague rumors of French companies filling the men with alarm of an ambush, show what the young commander had to contend with.

"Finally, Washington reached the Indians' camp where the Half-King consented to go with the white men to strike the French. After an engage-

ment of about fifteen minutes, the French company was beaten. Ten were killed, one wounded and twenty-one prisoners were taken at this battle.

"After the skirmish, the Half-King sent the Frenchmen's scalps with a hatchet, to all the Indian tribes in union with him. So the Mingoes and Shawanese promised to join in the war.

"This little skirmish was really the beginning of the war that set Europe on fire. The death of Jumonville brought reinforcements to the garrison at Duquesne, and with the French from Montreal came a large force of Indians. Commands were given to kill the English anywhere—on soil claimed by the French or on their own territory.

"From Indian scouts, the French learned of the position held by Washington, and in a short time the two forces met.

"From the few in numbers, and the poor position held by Washington, surrounded as he was on all sides by the superior forces of the French, the English were overpowered, and after a par-

ley, were permitted to retreat with flying colors and beat of drum, while the victors took possession of the place.

"At the beginning of the attack, the French had killed all the horses, cattle, and living creatures they could find, so that the English had to carry away their wounded on their backs to a place of safety where they were left with a guard, while the rest of the company made forced marches to a place sixty miles distant, where inhabitants could be found to help in the distressful circumstances.

"The bravery and spirit displayed by Colonel Washington and his little band toward the superior forces of the French at Fort Necessity, drew from the burgesses hearty appreciation and a vote of thanks to the gallant young commander who had held out so long against the foe.

"One excellent purpose this first defeat of Washington's served: It roused the colonies like an alarm-bell, to the immediate co-operation, combination, and concentration of ways and means

to resist the peril now shadowing the western frontier.

"About this time France was considered irresistible on land, with her 180,000 veterans, as England was on the seas, where she had over two hundred warships. So when eighteen French warships started out with 3,000 regulars for the mouth of the St. Lawrence in Canada, an English fleet set sail in pursuit to destroy this formidable armada.

"The fogs off the coast of Newfoundland, however, assisted the French boats to escape with the loss of but three of the fleet. The English were informed of the failure of the enterprise, and General Braddock was sent with regular troops to fight unseen dangers in the New World. By February, 1755, the gallant Britishers were landed at Hampton Roads.

"After a conference of five governors, Braddock was apportioned to the least attractive of all points—Duquesne. No horses or wagons, no food for the army, no arrangements of the necessary

kind, had been planned for by the colonists, and Braddock fumed and abused everybody for the lack of preparedness.

"But Benjamin Franklin secured a hundred and fifty wagons and outfits for the regulars, so that they could move to their destination. Thus the famous Franklin took his well-earned place in the lime-light of the American public.

"Braddock had heard of Washington and his unusual qualities, and at once invited the young soldier to accompany him in this important mission against the French.

"Washington was flattered by the letter and invitation, and replied at once that he would gladly serve, if he be permitted to return should inaction in war warrant it, to look after important business affairs of his own.

"Braddock willingly conceded these requests, for he knew the value of an experienced soldier and forester such as the young American was.

"But spring passed and summer was well on, and still the army had not left

Fort Cumberland, the place of assembly, one hundred and forty miles from Fort Duquesne. Fifty-two miles beyond Fort Cumberland lay Fort Necessity, only too familiar to Washington as the scene of his capitulation to the French a few months previous.

"About the middle of June the army began to cleave its difficult pathway through a primeval forest. So arduous was this work, that in ten days the men had but hewn thirty miles from their starting point. As is now known, all this work was a great blunder. The army should have followed Franklin's advice—landed at Philadelphia, advanced westward through the populated fertile country of Pennsylvania, and finished the campaign in six weeks. As it was, however, it took four and a half months to end the game.

"At Frazier, seven miles from Duquesne, the British were unexpectedly attacked by about nine hundred Frenchmen and Indians. At this time Braddock had about thirteen hundred men plunging ignorantly into the wilder-

ness, never dreaming of sending out scouts or skirmishers, although the Virginians were fully aware of the dangers of the advance, and futilely advised the practise in Indian warfare.

"But it was the mistreatment of the Iroquois Indians that wrought Braddock's ruin, for when the forests echoed with the war-cries of the Indians, the forest trees became living columns of fire, and the stately forest aisles were choked with smoke.

"A thousand gallant British and Virginians lay pierced with bullets, arrows, and scalped with tomahawks. Only twenty-three out of the eighty-six officers escaped, while Braddock was shot down when his men began the wild rush backward.

"Washington, weakened by fever, broken in mind by the fatality, buried the misguided general where the savages could not discover the grave.

"But it was this second defeat that primed Washington's nerves and heart against all defeat, and showed him that the hitherto invincible Britain was only

invincible under certain conditions. He began recruiting men, and in May, 1756, war was formally declared against France."

CHAPTER VII

HOW GEORGE APPLIED HISTORY

DURING the story told by Mrs. Parke, George sat thinking intently over the scenes depicted, wishing he had been with the British general and the intrepid Washington through that awesome march and flight in the forest.

Martha sat listening with intense interest to the historical sketch delineated by her mother, and sighed as she heard the story was ended for that day.

"Now, children, run out to play—but remember to play quietly so that baby will not awaken. And don't play with fire or run away to camp again!" advised Mrs. Parke.

"No, we won't, mother; but where is Jim? We haven't seen him for the past

few days," asked George, who had a plan for play all developed and ready to put to the test.

"Why, Jim is over at Grahams' visiting, but he is expected back this noon, his mammy told me. By the way, did you children know that Mrs. Graham brought John's cousins and aunty back from Washington, and the three children are now visiting John?"

"No, are they?" gasped George eagerly.

"How big are they?" asked Martha.

"The two boys are seven and twelve, and the girl is about nine. They are very nice children, but not accustomed to country life as you are," replied Mrs. Parke, opening the door to go out.

"Mother, mayn't we ask them over to play with us?" cried George, quickly following Mrs. Parke from the room.

"Why, certainly, if Mrs. Graham has no other plans for their amusement. I will 'phone her if you wish."

So George and Martha stood by their mother's side while she asked, and heard that John and his cousins would be de-

lighted to spend the afternoon at the Parkes'.

Mrs. Parke warned the two again about playing in a nice, quiet manner when the visitors arrived, and then she hurried to the nursery to look after baby.

Before she had turned the corner of the stairway, George was half-way down the basement stairs in search for Jim. He was successful, too, for Jim had returned home to his mammy an hour before, had been made much over in the guise of a large slice of mince pie, and now sat on the stone step of the areaway, pensively digesting his feast.

"Jim, come along! John's cousins are coming over to play with us!" whispered George eagerly, watching alertly lest the cook hear or see him beguiling Jim.

In another moment both boys were up the steps and over the grass to meet Martha, who stood waiting under the lilacs, as usual, the meeting-place for all concerned.

"Dem Washerton chilluns am a great trouble to der mudder," exclaimed Jim, rolling his eyes backward.

"Oh, yes! I forgot you were over at John's. Do tell me what they are like," said George.

"Wall, all I'se kin say, is dat you'se two an' Marse John am angels to dem free from Washerton—mah daddy sayed so!" said Jim, with an all-wise air acquired since his travels to the adjoining estate.

"Humph! We'll show them some sport they never had in a city!" bragged George, determined not to have three strangers from Washington take the lead in play when he was around.

A cat-call drew the attention of the three waiting under the lilac bush, to four running children coming over the lawns from the direction of the high stone wall on the side between Parkes' and Grahams' boundary line.

"Where'd you come from?" wondered Martha, keenly eying the city girl.

"Hoh! George and I could not com-

pete in climbing and running with Jack and Bob! And Win keeps up with her brothers!" proudly explained John, then signifying that Win was Winifred, his cousin, while Jack was the oldest, and Bob the youngest boy, of the visiting group.

"I've got a great plan to play. Just heard all about Washington's first real battle, and it will make great sport if we take sides and play it properly," said George, too eager to explain his plans to stop for company's sake.

"We were just coming over to see what we could do to have some fun," said Jack.

"How shall we play it?" asked Win, showing a readiness to take part in her brothers' fun that quite won Martha's approval.

"Why, I'm always George Washington, you know—seeing that he was my relative," the latter addition coming from George, as a semi-apology for selecting the leading character.

"Now, one of you boys can be General Braddock or the French com-

mander—whichever you like. And the two will choose sides. If the French take Bob the British take John. Then there is Jim for an Indian, and me for Washington. The two girls can be soldiers, too. What do you say?" concluded George.

"Great! I'll be the Frenchman and John can be Braddock!" replied Jack instantly.

"All right, then I'll choose George, and you can have Bob. Jim will have to be fought over to see who wins the Indian, and the girls can choose whom they want to fight with," replied John.

The next thing was to find suitable uniforms and ammunition. This was a difficult matter, as it necessitated the entering of the old attic of the Parkes' house. And should any adult be prowling about when George and Martha crept up the three flights of colonial stairs, it might interrupt the entire proceeding of the most decisive and certainly the greatest war these country colonists had ever dared to hope for.

Hence, many were the admonitions

and advices whispered as they started off, leaving the French and British armies agreed to wait under the side windows and catch any equipment that might come flying down from the attic windows.

George and Martha reached the second floor landing without meeting any one, but in turning the short hall to mount the third floor stairs, they encountered Jim's mother coming down.

"Whar yo' all creepin' lak dat?" demanded she.

"Nowhere—only going to the attic to hunt for some things we want to play with," instantly replied the alert George.

"Whar's dat Jim? Got him wid you agin in some more uv yo' tom-foolery?" asked the cook suspiciously.

"No, Aunt Jenny, we have company and we're all going to play out in the fields," said George, running upstairs to cut short any further catechism.

Martha followed after her brother and the cook stood looking after them for some time, but not seeing them re-

appear with any doubtful package, she continued on down to her kitchen.

Naturally, the children would not be carrying packages down the dangerous passageway from attic to battlefield, when they could toss the things out of the window to the grass below.

To George's great delight, he found a bunch of turkey feathers tied ready for dusters that winter. A great bouquet of these was tied in a Roman-striped table scarf and dropped from the window.

"Here's an old brass-buttoned coat that Lewis's grandpa's butler used to wear," whispered Martha, hauling into sight from a massive trunk the faded green uniform.

"What a find! Maybe there's more of 'em!" excitedly suggested George, helping pull the things from the chest.

They found the coachman's livery complete, with gray beaver hat and cockade. At the very bottom of this mine they also drew out a relic of the Civil War, an old veteran's complete uniform, with its cap and knapsack.

"Oh, how wonderful!" sighed Martha with clasped hands. "George, please promise me that Win and I may dress up too, and not fight in girls' skirts!"

"Oh, I don't know! Maybe there won't be any uniforms left for you girls."

"Yes, there will be, too! I found this chest, and we girls will have first pick out of them or you won't get any!" declared Martha defiantly.

George was so amazed at his sister's attitude, showing him plainly that women of the present day will not be ordered about by mere males, that he bowed meekly to her commands.

Everything that could be utilized in the forthcoming battle was sent flying down from the attic windows, and then the two pilferers crept downstairs.

When they reached the porch not a thing could be seen of either clothing or soldiers, but a careful whistle guided them to the hedge back of the lilac bushes.

"We'll have great fun with these clothes!" Jack complimented George.

"I told Martha that Win and she could have first choice of the stuff to dress up in," added George magnanimously.

"The girls! Why, they can't fight like we can," objected Bob.

"All the same they're our uniforms, and I found them!" retorted Martha, handling the items to make her selection.

"Let me tell you what to do. I'm oldest here," said Jack. "Martha take one article first, Win the next, George the next, me next, John after me, then Bob, and then Jim."

"Fine! Hurry up, Martha, and take something," agreed George.

So Martha, eager to graduate out of girls' skirts, took the coachman's striped knee-breeches.

"Now, Win, your turn next," said Jack.

And Winifred, who had beautiful long curls which she detested, chose the cocked hat, under which she tucked her tresses.

"Now George!"

Then George selected the brass-buttoned coat of the old veteran's grand-uncle.

Jack chose the butler's faded coat with brass buttons. John looked the items over and took the coachman's gray beaver hat, Bob the trousers, and then it was Jim's turn.

True to instinct, Jim chose the striped Roman table scarf.

"Boys! Just the thing! We'll dress Jim in the scarf and tie a bunch of feathers to his head. I can get some red chalk from the school-room and streak war-paint on his face and chest!" cried George, with repressed excitement.

"Fine!" "Great!" and "Wonderful!" sounded from the others, but Jim pondered this new plan, wondering whether this might mean the unpleasant repetition of a scene like the homestead fire.

When all the garments were divided, they were apportioned thus: Martha had the breeches and vest of different uniforms; Winifred, the hat and coat of others; George, the coat and scabbard;

Jack, the butler's coat and a pair of long white duck trousers; John, the coachman's coat and beaver hat; Bob, the trousers and an odd coat, and Jim the scarf, feathers and a dull, small axe from the wood-cellar, picked up as George ran out of the areaway.

They were soon arrayed, and no one being willing to go to the house for the red chalk, it was decided to add a few more turkey feathers to his costume and streak his face and neck with grease from the garage supply.

Down back of the row of poplars near the stone wall—as far from the barns and house as it was possible to go—the contending armies arranged to fight out the war between England and France.

"You French have to climb that wall and hold the fort on the other side, while we chop through the forest here and get up to fight you away," said John, looking up and down the wall-line for a better suggestion.

"Ah no, we can't fight that way, Johnnie," argued Jack. "Let's go on

to the hedge fence and fight through that. Then we can lay traps, shoot through and catch prisoners."

This brilliant plan was immediately accepted, and the soldiers took their respective sides.

"Which side does Ah b'long to?" asked Jim wistfully.

"We don't know yet, Jim. You're an Iroquois brave, and we will both try to get you," said George, pushing Jim into the hedge, where he was asked to hide and shoot arrows at both sides.

The ammunition used was composed of beans, shot from pea-shooters, which every boy carries in his pockets. Jim had an armful of short sticks to throw for arrows, and the generals each had a genuine weapon—one the broken sword and the other its scabbard, that came from the chest in the attic.

That was a fearful battle—shots flew back and forth, stinging the soldiers with the impact of the hard beans; the two generals commanded and countermanded orders so rapidly and wildly that both sides ran hither and thither

without obeying any order. Jim, dressed scantily in the long brilliant scarf and plenty of turkey feathers, received most of the shot, as he was directly on the firing line in the hedge, until the French commander pulled him out and had him fight on their side.

The fine green hedge was fast being demolished by the war, when Jack shouted: "It's time for Braddock to die!"

"Well, why don't you send your Indian over to scalp him?" called George, meantime shooting with such good aim that the bean went right into Jack's opened mouth.

After sputtering over the shot, Jack sent the Iroquois creeping carefully through a new breach in the fort, and just as General Braddock and Washington decided that Jim was too timid to come over and fight, Martha screamed a warning shout; but it was too late.

With true savage subtlety of warfare, Jim brought down the blunt, small

axe on Braddock's head, where the stiff beaver fortunately broke the blow. Even as it was, the British general toppled over from the onslaught, and had to gasp for a moment to recover his breath.

A wild shout rent the air as Jim jumped and danced a war-dance, swinging his axe and yelling wildly. So unexpected was this part of the program that the French abandoned their easily-acquired victory and came eagerly through the hedge to watch Jim's antics.

"You lay still where you are, Braddock," commanded the young Washington. "I've got to bury you before this Indian gets here to scalp you!"

Whether John would have received proper burial, or the Iroquois be dissuaded from scalping his victim, cannot be said, for the gardener and chauffeur came upon the war scene, having heard the yells of the French when they downed the British general.

The sight which met their eyes was so funny that both men doubled over

in mirth, and wished the families could have witnessed this battle scene.

Being discovered as they were, the children begged the two amused witnesses not to tell any one. Then John was pulled out of the stiff, gray beaver, which had been driven down over his entire face with the blow from the axe, and Jim was ordered back to civilized clothing, much against his inclination, for paint, war-bonnet and Roman-stripes suited his tastes exactly.

The bundles of clothing were rolled together and left in charge of the gardener, who agreed to smuggle them back to the attic via the housemaid, his daughter. But his promise was ignored the moment he saw his favorite hedge.

"Whad' yo' mean by smashin' dat fine haidge lak dat? D'yoh know it tuk us five yeahs t' grow dat same bushes lak dat?"

"Well, when two nations fight, everything goes—they never stop just for houses, lands and hedges!" retorted George.

"But yo' all destructed more'n forty

feet uv dis haidge, an' yoh diden have t' use more'n six feet ef yo' had t' fight!" wailed the poor man.

Suddenly from the other side of the hedge, came smothered cries and amazed exclamations, as Mrs. Graham and her friend peered at, and then through the well broken-down hedge, and beheld the victorious and vanquished soldiers in all their battle array.

Immediately there followed a retreat of both armies that spoke well for the immediate future friendship of the enemies, for now they had met a common Waterloo which would necessitate immediate flight and swiftness to circumvent deserved punishment and imprisonment.

CHAPTER VIII

DELIGHTFUL IMPRISONMENT

MRS. GRAHAM soon reached the Parke house and asked to see the mistress at once. Fearing something had happened to her mischievous children, Mrs. Parke ran downstairs and into the room where the two ladies awaited her coming.

"Anything dreadful happen?" cried Mrs. Parke, as soon as she had greeted the ladies.

"Nothing more than a decisive battle between the British and French. But the scene of the fight is what has happened," said Mrs. Graham, with annoyance at the thought of the hedge.

"What is it?—I haven't heard or seen a thing. The little ones are out playing about somewhere with John and

his cousins," declared Mrs. Parke, still in the dark.

"Maybe they were, but they are not now. I fancy they are hiding safely somewhere. But let me tell you as much as I know."

The story of how the two ladies, while walking in the rose-garden, heard shouts and yells coming from the extreme end of the property line, and hurried over to find the hedge almost hewn and broken to pieces, while Jack, commanding the French, had just negotiated with the gardener for the safe conduct of the uniforms to the attic again, was told to an eager listener.

At the conclusion of how the soldiers fled indiscriminately, Mrs. Parke covered her face with both hands and laughed till the tears rolled from her eyes.

"It's all very well for you to laugh, Kate, but just think of what might have happened if John had not been protected by that stiff beaver hat," said Mrs. Graham angrily.

"Then I wouldn't have laughed. But

he *was* protected, so why conjure up things that might have been?" said Mrs. Parke.

"Because these children must be taught once for all that in one of their Revolutionary escapades, one of them might be very dangerously injured—perhaps fatally so! John is my son, you know."

"Yes, as much yours as George is mine, but children are especially protected by an all-seeing Providence. I'd rather have them play in good outdoor exercise, such as these Washington ideas give them, than to have them sulk, or lounge and tease each other about the house or verandas. At least, you will admit that they are never at a loss for something to keep them occupied."

"Most assuredly not!" sighed Mrs. Graham emphatically.

"Well, I always punish my two youngsters when they do anything too wild or unexpected, just to keep them within bounds, but I wouldn't think of forbidding them to play Washington to their hearts' content, even if a hedge

is broken down, or some old family relics are utilized for the game."

"Well, under the circumstances, I suppose you are willing to pacify the gardener for the damaged hedge, as well as pay for the new one," said Mrs. Graham, smiling feebly at the result of her visit.

"I will not have much trouble with the gardener, as he is the sworn ally of those children. As for the hedge, I should think you would rather pay for a broken bush than for a son's broken head," teased Mrs. Parke laughingly.

So it was decided that each side pay half of the costs, and both mothers punish again the participants in the life of Washington, although it seemed doubtful if the children would ever be cured of the desire to try a new experience.

The day following the great battle at the hedge, George and Martha were told to remain in the attic as a punishment. Now, both thought this a dreadful hardship, although had they been told not to go near the attic, both would

certainly have delighted in trying to get as near to it as was possible, without actually breaking their word or being downright disobedient.

But a fine drizzle began falling about ten o'clock, and as this would have spoiled the day for outdoor fun, George sighed:

"It's all for the best, Martha! Here we are in the dry attic with wonderful trunks and chests still to be examined, while the day *might* have been fine, and made us feel sorry to stay in."

"Yes, but I wonder what John and the French are doing?" wondered Martha.

"Jack said they were going back to Washington to-day or to-morrow morning, so I don't s'pose we will see them again."

Martha went over to the window to look out toward the Grahams' house, which could be seen from their third-floor windows. But no one was to be seen at the Grahams', and she turned to walk away, when she spied an old book-case filled with huge volumes, for-

merly the library sets of her grandfather Parke.

While George rummaged about the old chests and trunks, Martha looked over the titles of the old red morocco bindings, and finally called to her brother:

"George, here's a pictured life of Washington. Help me lift it down—it is so heavy."

Eager for amusement, George ran over, and together they carried the large tome to the old-fashioned settle by the window, and knelt down before it to look at the pictures.

After turning over the first pictures in the book, Martha said: "Oh, see! here is one of the battle scenes we fought yesterday. This is the 'Battle of Monongahela!'"

Both children studied the expressions of the savages, as they scalped the luckless soldiers, and the courage of Washington, who bravely called "Forward!" to his handful of men while a mass of Indians stood ready to scalp every one of them.

"Say, Martha, aren't you thankful we had a Washington in America?" said George, as his sister turned the page.

"Yes, indeed! Just think of what would have happened if he had never been born," sighed Martha, with relief that he had.

"Here's where they are burying General Braddock. See the men crying, and some of 'em holding torches in the dark woods so they can see to dig the grave," said George reverently at the awesome sight.

"The next chapter in the book is all about the Battle of Lake George. See the men in the boats rowing across the lake?" said Martha, turning the page on the death scene that made George act so strangely different from his usual independent self.

"Mother never read us that; s'pose we take turns in reading it to each other while we are shut up here?" ventured George.

"So we will, and maybe we'll show mother that we know more about Washington than she thinks we do," and

Martha arranged the cumbersome volume so that it was easier to read from.

"I'll read first, and then you take your turn," said she.

" 'The expeditions against Niagara and Crown Point failed, but the failures were not as disastrous as that of Duquesne. The troops of the northern sections assembled at Albany, and Shirley took command of the one against Niagara; but many delays caused the men to be held at Albany until the season was well advanced. The army was composed of regiments from New York, New Jersey, New England, and a few Indians.

" 'In July he began the march for Oswego, but on the way he heard of the dreadful news of Braddock's defeat, and this spread such consternation through the ranks that many men deserted, while the Indians showed signs of turning to the stronger of the war parties.

" 'It was late in August that he finally managed to reach Oswego, where he made a strenuous effort to fill up his

ranks. All the Indians deserted here, and he finally started out for Niagara, but heavy rains and sickness in the ranks caused him to give up this plan. So leaving seven hundred men to garrison the fort at Oswego, he started back with the remainder of his army to Albany.

"'The army destined for Crown Point consisted of about 5,000 men under the command of Johnson. Impatient to start the campaign, this commander collected equipment and sent it to a place about sixty miles above Albany.

"'Here a fort was erected, and having left a few men to garrison it, the others advanced to the southern extremity of Lake George. Here Johnson heard that the enemy was erecting a fort at the opposite end of the lake, about fifteen miles below Crown Point.

"'He was about to move against the enemy, thus hoping to reduce the work on the fort before it could be defended, but information caused him to change his plans.

" 'The news was, that Baron Dieskau had arrived in Canada from France with a large army, and with the Canadians and Indians was now advancing rapidly to attack the English settlements. The dire news was sent to the colonies, and Johnson began to fortify his camp. He secretly conveyed a few cannons from Fort Edward to his camp, and doubling his spies and scouts, awaited attack.

" 'Dieskau proceeded to Oswego, but hearing of Johnson's advance on Crown Point, he directed operations against him, sure of an easy victory. The Frenchman's contempt for the English was increased when Johnson, through mistaken information, sent forth a thousand men to attack the French, who were said to be advancing incautiously in companies.

" 'Needless to say that the report had been given out by the French themselves, and the moment the English were far enough from camp to be trapped, they were surrounded and many were slain; but the greater part

of the detachment escaped to camp, closely pursued by the victorious French.

"'Dieskau had heard that Johnson had no artillery at camp, and confident of victory, he formed his men to advance in true military style, instead of attacking the fort at once.

"'Johnson, determined to fight courageously and defend the camp to the last, uncovered the cannons, which so confused the enemy that they fled to the woods, leaving Dieskau's ranks in greater confusion than if a rout had caused it.

"'The French regulars, however, stood their ground and opened a brisk fire on the camp, which continued for several hours.

"'The engagement lasted until the French were compelled to retire, after the loss of more than 1,000 men, Dieskau being mortally wounded also, and made prisoner. His remaining army, preparing to rest and reform their company, were surprised, attacked and all fled in greatest confusion, leav-

ing their baggage and equipment behind.

" 'Johnson did not follow up this victory, as it was late in the autumn, and he decided that it was a hazard too great to risk under the conditions. So he built Fort William Henry at the southern end of the lake, and leaving 600 men to garrison it, disbanded the remainder of his army.

" 'Thus did the three main expeditions fail, and at the end of 1755 the French were more firmly planted in North America than ever before.

" 'Having won so easily the land at Crown Point, and having won other important points, as well as having built or strengthened many forts, the French influenced the vacillating minds of the Indians, who began flocking to their standard.

" 'But when the French endeavored to encourage the Cherokees to join their side, the attempt only caused this powerful nation to become firmer allies of Great Britain, and by a treaty made with the governor of South Car-

olina, they voluntarily ceded to the king of Great Britain a large portion of their territory.

" 'The defeat of Braddock and the flight of Dunbar left the frontier of Virginia exposed to the horrors of Indian warfare. Then the Assembly voted money and men for the protection of the colonists.

" 'Colonel Washington, being the ablest man in the colony, was appointed commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces. With but a thousand men, sometimes not more than seven hundred, the young commander was expected to defend a frontier of more than three hundred miles in extent, against savages of the cruelest type.

" 'But feeling that no time could be lost, Washington proceeded to inspect the condition of the frontier defences. He made his headquarters at Winchester on the 14th of September, 1755, and thence visited the different forts. While on this work, reports came that Indians had attacked and were massacring the settlers of the back settlements.

" 'Washington immediately changed his course and hurried to Winchester to induce the terrified people to unite in defending their families. But his commands were of no avail, in the face of the frightful deeds, and the fears of the people, and the enemy fled with their plunder and captives to security afforded them by the guns at Fort Duquesne.

" 'The young commander knew that repetitions of such acts could only be stopped by securing the fort of the French on the Ohio. But this was an impossibility, because of few men and no means. And he could not induce the Assembly to increase either, to make it possible to protect the frontier properly.'

"That's as far as I want to read; now you take a turn," suggested Martha, rising from her knees to make room for George to take her place before the book.

"I'd rather read about his crossing the Delaware and the big battles in the Revolution," said George, turning the

pages over and over to find the place he wished.

"We ought to read right along, and not jump from place to place as you do," objected Martha.

"Oh, that's all right for school, but when we are going to be amused we ought to find enjoyable ways—not like lessons," replied George.

A step on the floor outside and a hand at the door-knob dispersed all thought of reading, however, and the two prisoners jumped up to find out who was coming to see them.

A fuzzy little dark head popped in at the crack of the door and Jim whispered:

"S-sh! Ah got a bag uv gingersnaps. Mah mammy guv 'em t' me t' brung up heah fer us all."

"Oh, goody! goody! Come over by the window and let's eat 'em," said Martha eagerly.

So the book was forgotten for the time, while Jim regaled his companions with the results of his mammy's splendid art.

CHAPTER IX

THE EFFECTS OF PRISON LIFE

WHEN the last crumb of the ginger-snaps was gone, the three children jumped up and looked around for a suggestion of entertainment.

"Jim, did you ever see the pictures in this big book?" asked Martha, going to the opened volume of history.

"No'm, Ah hain't never see'd anythin' but them pickshers in mah culler book what yer granny guv me."

"Oh, don't waste time showing Jim that book now—let me show him some of the old war relics in this chest," called George, lifting the lid of the long box.

The three children admired or laughed at the odd-looking clothes found in the chest, and then Martha raised the lid of an old hair-trunk that

stood close to the chest. She had peeped into it the day of the French and English battle, but being called to help with the uniforms, had forgotten it again.

The first thing she found was an old yellow linen slip-cover, spread out so that it covered the entire top of the trunk. But something inside was carefully pinned up, and a string at the open end tied the contents safely within.

Martha removed the pins and untied the strings and lifted one side of the linen bag. But whatever was carefully protected by soft paper wrappers within, could not be seen without removing the entire package from the old slip-cover. So the bag was carried to the settle and George helped to slide the package out.

More pins and strings held the paper about something soft and swishy.

"Ooh-ah! isn't it lovely!" sighed Martha, clasping her hands.

"For a girl—ye-es, it is pretty!" George grudged.

"Ah tink it am de weddin' dress uv some gran'mother," remarked Jim,

placing his dirty hands behind him to insure their not touching the shimmering, soft silk dress that lay before them.

"I have an idea!" suddenly exclaimed Martha.

"What is it?" asked George, looking at her curiously.

"Won't that make the most beautifulest dress for Martha Custis to get married in?" said Martha, in a dramatic manner.

"Oh!" was all the two boys dared to say at the idea.

"And I'll wear curls made of long shavings, and a fan—and maybe I can borrow mother's satin evening slippers! What will you wear at the wedding, George?" said Martha excitedly.

"I don't know. Let's open this and see how long it will be. You don't want to play getting married to-day, do you?" ventured George.

"Oh, no! We have to have you come and visit me and fall in love, and then ask me to marry you, you know," said Martha, with great superiority natural to her sex.

"I don't want to go through all that tom-foolery! Let's get John over and just play getting married. Jim can get out and run over for John in some way or other. Will you, Jim?" asked George.

"Ah will ef mah granny don' ketch me runnin' out de areaway," agreed Jim.

"Say, Martha, why not let Jim down out of the window?" cried George, with sudden inspiration.

"Oh, fine! How can we do it?"

"Ah, say! Ah did'en 'gree t' fall down free stories!" objected the scapegoat of the Washington war-parties.

"Don't be afraid, Jim! You won't have to fall if you do as we tell you," consoled George.

"Yeh! Dat's what yo' all said when Ah played Injun in dat Burdock fight, an' den Ah got a wholloping from bof sides—mah mammy an' mah daddy, when dey hearn tell how Ah had t' scalp Burdock t' win de fight fer de French!" grumbled Jim.

"Oh, that was different! This is only

an easy way for you to get away from here and look for John, you see," explained George anxiously.

Martha had been gazing down, and now she turned to say: "We will have to tie rope or strips of sheets together to let him down like firemen do, you know."

Immediately George began seeking for a rope, and fortunately for the future experiences of the "Little Washingtons" he found a great coil of rope that was placed near the window to use in case of fire. One end was secured to an iron ring in the beam under the window casing.

"Oh, what luck! Just the thing," cried George, as he began unwinding the rope.

"Here now, Jim, stand over here by the window while we tie you up. And remember—run right over to John's and tell him to come over and play minister for us to get married," said George, as he reached the end of the rope.

"No, no—not to get married so

quick! Only to play being your step-son," corrected Martha.

"How can he be my step-son if you won't get married?" said George scornfully.

"Ah reckon de ting t' do is fer me t' git John heah an' let yo' all ack what yo' lak afterward," mumbled Jim, with one of his rare spells of brilliancy.

"Yes, that's the thing to do!" approved Martha.

George lost no time in tying the rope about Jim's slim little waist, but to make doubly sure that it would not slip, the messenger-to-be begged his companions to wind it about again and again. Thus, when Jim was pronounced ready to descend via the aerial route, he looked more like a rope-bound mummy than a live boy.

"Safe and sure as this floor!" bragged George, admiring his handiwork.

"Hurry up and let him down or some one will come up and stop us!" warned Martha.

Between them, George and Martha dragged the heavy window settle away

and Jim crawled out on the sill to look down.

"Ah wish it war higher up!" sighed he.

"Higher up! Aren't three stories high enough?" cried George, taken back for once by Jim's courage.

"Ah means dat Ah wish dat grass war higher up—'bout free feet under this winder," explained Jim dolefully.

His two conspirators exchanged glances, and George motioned Martha to act quickly or Jim would bolt.

Without further preliminaries, Jim was shoved over the window-sill and told to "hold fast" to the rope till his feet touched the ground. Instinctively, the victim clutched at the rope above his head as he felt himself sliding off of the shingled eaves, and it was well he did so at the time.

Neither one of the plotters had stopped to consider that the rope wound about Jim's body might suddenly unwind with the weight hanging at its end, thus whirling the boy around and around, and swiftly jerking him up the

moment the coil had found its resistance by the loop tied about the body. But Jim's hold on the rope above his head prevented any strain from making the rope unwind itself as the weight was lowered.

George and Martha found that Jim, although light in weight and small of size, was rather heavy when hung from an attic window. The force of gravitation from that height added considerably to his weight. but the children did not think of this.

"Gracious, Martha! Brace your feet against this beam or he'll slip!" cried George, the beads of moisture starting on his forehead.

"Don't you think he is 'most down?" breathed Martha uncomfortably.

"I'll hang on to him while you look —be quick about it, though!" ordered George, getting an extra twist of the rope about his wrist and bending back on the rope.

Martha climbed up on the settle, and looking from the window, she saw Jim try to get a better hold on the rope with

one hand that was being chafed. He was about opposite the veranda roof at the time.

As she looked he began gyrating furiously, and as he whirled he seemed to drop. Martha screamed frantically, making George pull the harder to hold up the rope—for he feared from the sudden laxity on his end, that the rope had slipped in some manner.

Even as Martha yelled, Jim came to the end of his whirl, and he was yanked to a halt by the tautness of the rope gripped by George in the attic. From the resistance, he was suddenly stopped within two feet of the ground. The loop tied under his arms had tightened by the jerk upon it, so that he could not move, and could scarcely breathe.

At the time the rope began to unwind itself from Jim's body, George was stretched almost flat upon his back with the strain he was bringing on his end of the rope. George was just going to ease his hold when the laxness suddenly ceased and the yank came, so that he was unceremoniously pulled to

the window and had it not been for the wall, he might have been made to follow Jim's descent.

Simultaneously with George's contact with the wall, Jim dropped the rest of the way—about two feet from the grass, and sprawled out, face down, on Mother Earth.

By this time Martha was speechless from fright, and George, while he freed his skinned wrist of the rope, begged for word about Jim, but to no avail. His sister could not utter a sound.

The moment George saw Jim stretched on the grass, he thought he had fallen, so rushing wildly from the attic, he ran down the stairs, colliding with his grandmother, who called to know "What now?"

On, on, down to the hall and out of the side door went George, picturing himself in a doomed man's cell—doomed for murder in the first degree.

As George reached the prostrate boy, Jim discovered he was not dead, but safely reposing on the ground, so he

dared to open his eyes and take a deep breath.

"Ah-umm!" sighed Jim, as the sweet fresh air filled his lungs, and his eyes beheld at close range the damp, green blades of close-cropped lawn-grass.

"Jim! Jim! are you dead?" cried George, on his knees beside the boy.

"Ya-as, Ah am—an' it's all yo' fault, too!" whimpered Jim, feeling a sudden pity at the thought of himself as a possible angel, leaving his mammy on earth to cry for him.

"Oh, Jim, forgive me—us, I mean! Martha and I never dreamed you were going to let go like you did!"

"Ah won't never forgive yo' all, cuz Ah mought hab been killed an' who could save me?" howled the boy.

George resented this inference. "We didn't do it! You just went and let go, and then you spun around like we do in the swing when we play flying and twist the swing-ropes all up tight!"

"Diden yo leg'go your end?" questioned Jim, sitting upright to stare unbelievingly.

"'Course not! Look at my poor wrists! Did I let go and wear the skin to the bone—did I?" cried George, holding up his hands to Jim's gaze.

"Nah—Ah reckon yo' diden—but whad was it?"

"Yourself, 'cause you let go of the rope when you ought to have gripped it like anything!"

Before further explanations could be given, Martha, followed by grandmother with her knitting (she had dropped a whole row of stitches in the excitement), nurse holding the baby at a dangerous angle, mammy with bread-dough clinging to her hands, and mother holding her hat, which she had just removed upon coming indoors, crowded about the two boys—one still tied in the rope.

Every one saw the rope, followed its length to the top story, and then let their eyes lower again to the two silent boys gazing speechless at each other.

"What is this?" demanded Mrs. Parke.

"Jim, what yo' goin' for to do?

Clim' dat house an' git in dat attic whar dem chilluns wuz prisoners?" came from Jim's mammy, with dire meaning in her tones.

Before any one of the three culprits could open their lips to explain, mammy had Jim out of the coil, and was yanking him by the collar of his loose shirt, in the direction of the areaway, there to do penance for trying to climb a rope.

Mrs. Parke ordered mammy and nurse to take charge of the two children who had broken their pledge to remain all day in the attic. They were remanded to two separate store-room closets, where no window or rope could offer temptations. Only a high transom window for light and air was in these closets.

As no explanations would be heard, Martha and George, to say nothing of innocent Jim, felt they were cruelly misunderstood. And Jim, as he sat in a corner of the kitchen tied to the wooden stool with a wash-line, wished with all the fervor in his trembling lit-

tle body that he had really and truly gone to heaven when the rope let him down to earth.

"Reckon dat mammy would feel different ef Ah wuz climin' dem clouds playin' a lil' harp," whimpered Jim to himself, tears crowding from his round black eyes as he pictured himself thus.

"Whad dat yo' mumblin' to yo'self in dat cornah?" threatened his mammy.

"Nuffin! Ah jes' wishin' Ah'd gone daid dis time, den yo' woulden had no Jimmy t' shake an' tie up to de floor!" wailed he.

"Sea heah, boy, don' yo' go an' 'dulge dem fool notions er Ah'll hep yo' cry dem away jes as soon as dis bread is bakin'," came ominously from his respected parent. So Jim drooped silently in the corner, wondering if his companions-in-misery were getting all that he hoped was coming to them.

But Jim did not hear of their form of punishment until some time later, because other exciting events crowded such past and already forgotten memories from mind.

That evening at dinner, when the two culprits had been bathed and dressed, and ready to meet their father, and Jim had been treated to bread and molasses before going to bed, Mr. Parke announced wonderful news.

"Who do you think called me up on the telephone to-day?" said he, looking at George and Martha.

"The constable?" gasped George fearfully.

His father threw back his head and laughed loudly, but Mrs. Parke watched the children with an expression of understanding.

"Of course not! Have you two been meriting arrest again?"

"No, but some folks *think* we have!" said George, sending his mother a pitying look.

"Well, I'm glad you are safe for the time being," laughed Mr. Parke, seeing the glance. "But this is a fine bit of news for you and Martha."

No one seemed able to guess the secret, so Mr. Parke had to tell them.

"My sister and her two children are

coming from Philadelphia to spend a few weeks with us—how about it?"

Before Mr. Parke had quite finished his sentence, George and Martha were up and over at his side, each hugging him from his and her vantage point. Mrs. Parke, too, was mildly enthused, and when one could be heard again, remarked:

"Oh, I'm so glad, Tom, as those children were always such models of behavior! Now George and Martha will see what quiet, obedient youngsters are like!"

"Don't be so sure of that, Kate. Sister is now in Washington, and 'phoned me from there. She says that Jack and Anne are all she can manage these days, and she hoped George and Martha would be able to interest them in other things besides pranks and play."

This desirable news brought the eyes of George and Martha to meet each other, and the latter said in a whisper: "How about that wedding, then?"

"Just the thing—and the courtship, don't forget that."

"What is this you're planning now?" asked Mrs. Parke.

"Oh, just a nice, quiet game," said both children, nodding understandingly at each other.

"Well, I'm relieved to hear that. We want you to play quiet, polite games with your little cousins when they are here," replied Mr. Parke, with a sigh.

So the "Little Washingtons" went to bed to dream of all the things they would do when Jack and Anne Davis would be their guests.

And how they carried out their plans will be told in their next book, called "The Little Washingtons' Relatives."

THE END

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They spend a pleasant summer on two adjoining farms in Vermont. During the voyage they try to capture a "frigate" but little Jim is caught and about to be punished by the Captain when his confederates hasten in and save him.

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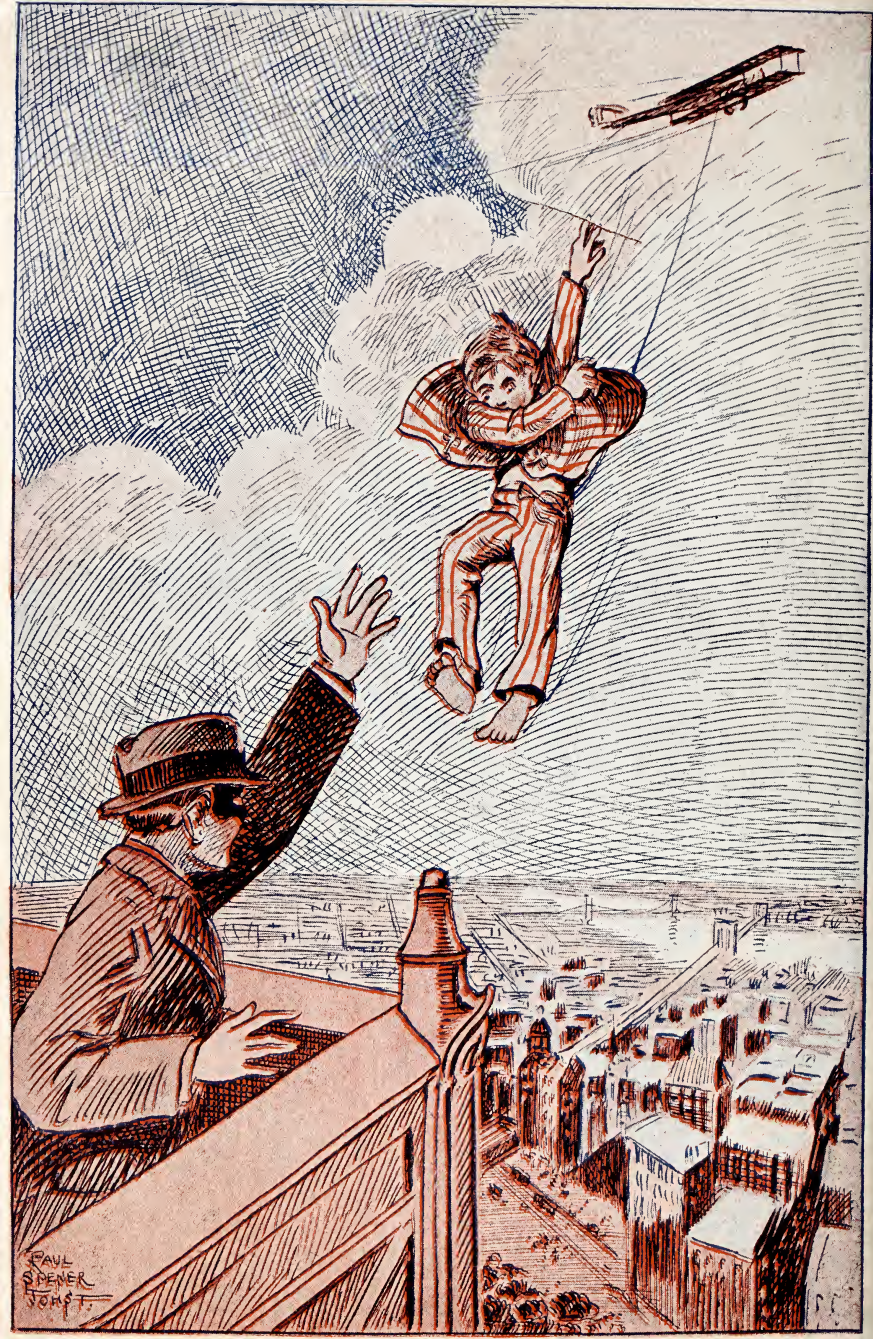
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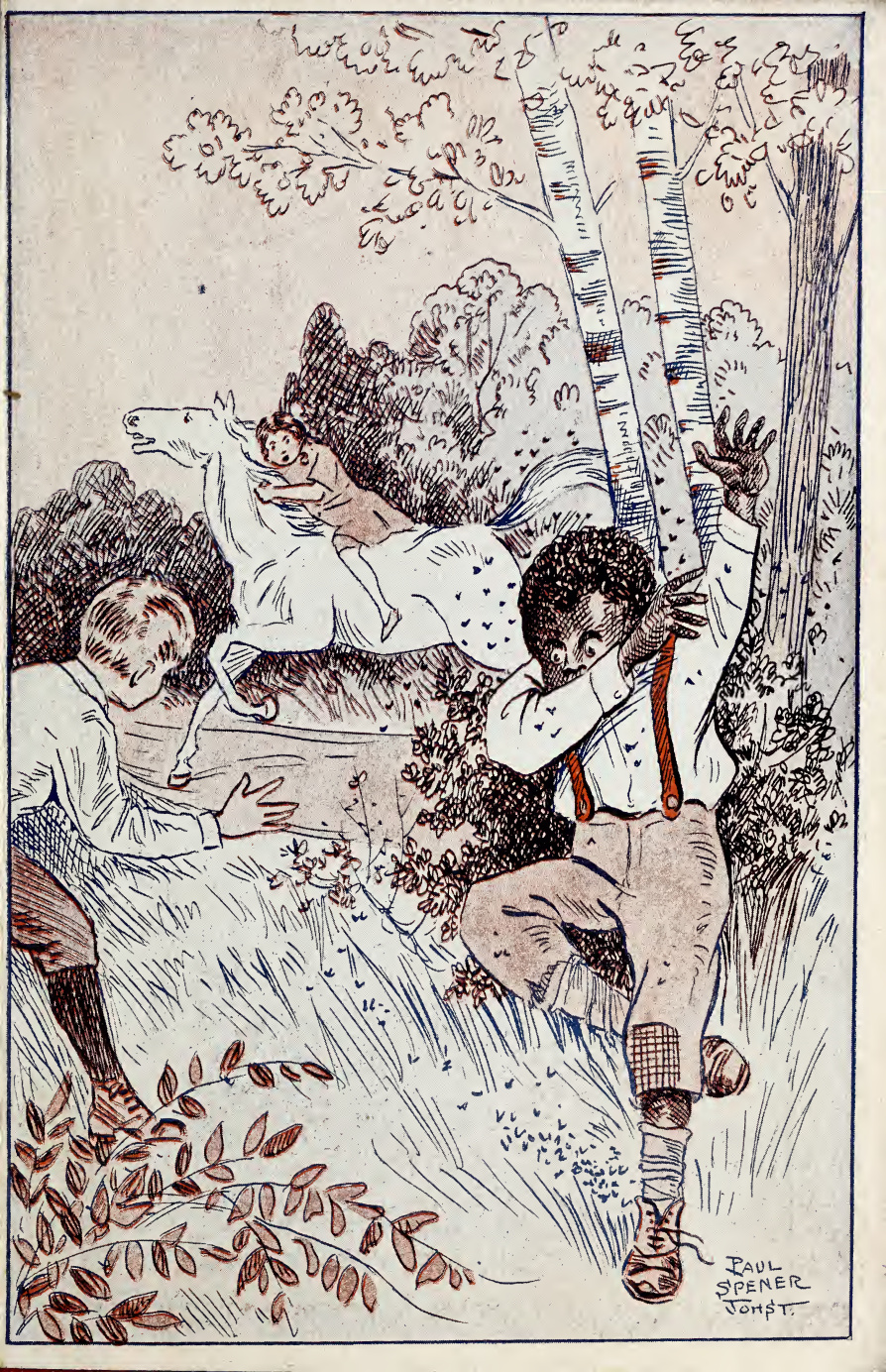
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